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THESIS

SYNCHRONIZING FEDERAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING FOR NATIONAL CATASTROPHES

by

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March 2010

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**SYNCHRONIZING FEDERAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING
FOR NATIONAL CATASTROPHES**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes the establishment of a Center for National Catastrophe Planning to address systemic problems in the planning for national catastrophes. The state of the art planning capabilities of the federal government do not include a structure to coordinate, validate and synchronize federal level operational plans effectively. Nor does it include the means to integrate non-federal stakeholders into the planning process. Since the Three Mile Island disaster, the governance structure has been modified after each major catastrophe to address major shortcomings that resulted in poor response performance by the federal government. These failures were consistently attributed to the lack of coordination and synchronization of federal operational plans with key stakeholders. Today, the federal government has a modernized governance framework but the core structure that caused the problems remains in place. The system is based on the assumption that the federal departments and agencies have the required planning capabilities and follow the governance structure as designed to develop, coordinate and integrate operational plans for catastrophes. History has proven the folly of this assumption. The Center for National Catastrophe Planning could effectively bridge these gaps by providing a structure with adequate authorities to integrate and synchronize federal operational plans.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BG-N	Beyond Goldwater-Nichols
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Explosive
CDEM Groups	Civil Defence and Emergency Management Groups
CMOC	Civil-Military Operations Center
CNCP	Center for National Catastrophe Planning
CONPLAN	Concept Plan
CPG	Comprehensive Preparedness Guide
CSIS	Center for Strategic International Studies
CT	Counter Terrorism
DC	Deputies Committee
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoD	Department of Defense
DRG	Domestic Readiness Group
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAO	General Accounting Office
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HHS	Health and Human Services
HSC	Homeland Security Council
HSIN	Homeland Security Information Network
IMPT	Incident Management Planning Team
IPC	Interagency Policy Committee
IPS	Integrated Planning System
ITRPA	Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act
JIATF	Joint Interagency Task Force
JIATF-S	Joint Interagency Task Force South
MOD	Minister of Defense
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Center
NHSP	National Homeland Security Plan
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NIP	National Implementation Plan
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
NPG	National Preparedness Guidelines

NPS	National Planning Scenarios
NRF	National Response Framework
NRP	National Response Plan
NSC	National Security Council
OPLAN	Operational Plans
PC	Principals Committee
PNSR	Project for National Security Reform
PSEPC	Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
QHSR	Quadrennial Homeland Security Review
SGS	Strategic Guidance Statement
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TFER	Task Force for Emergency Readiness
TMI	Three Mile Island
USNORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union..." is not a statement proclaiming the birth of a perfect government. On the contrary, it is the beginning of the founding fathers' new experiment, a purposely designed harmoniously dysfunctional system that balanced power and made unity of purpose subject to collaboration, all for one purpose and one purpose only, to preserve liberty. Since day one of this magnificent experiment, there has been an urge to improve the way the government is organized to keep up with the social, economic and political landscape. It is hard to imagine today that a person can be found in the United States that thinks that the federal government is perfect as it is and that it does not require change. On the contrary, a robust national debate is taking place, which has been given impetus by the seismic events of September 11, the war in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina and the economic crisis of 2009 that is questioning whether the current structures *are* up to the tasks of modern times. This debate has generated a tsunami of ideas to reform the federal government, and some may argue a need for modernizing our constitutional form of government.

This thesis acknowledges that the federal government is in dire need of reform, especially in respect to national and homeland security. Advocates for change often refer to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 as an example of the type of change needed. That may or may not be the case, but reform of that scale can take decades. Clearly, the trend in modern times is towards more integration and less stovepiping. The niche of this thesis is the area of operational planning for national level catastrophes, to build on that trend, seeking to move the ball forward while patiently waiting for the evolutionary

forces to shape the federal government into a more modern and capable entity. With that in mind, the thesis first examines the problems that afflict the federal operational planning system.¹

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. The Void

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the 2005 Hurricane Katrina were the defining events that jolted the federal government into a massive effort to develop a national system to prepare for and respond to 21st century catastrophes. This effort was influenced by the findings and recommendations from post-mortem investigations and assessments conducted by Congress, the executive branch and various think tanks. All identified critical shortcomings in the planning, coordination, and synchronization framework of the federal government thought to have contributed to the systemic failures experienced during these events.²

The anniversaries of these events in 2010 find the United States with no viable structure to coordinate and synchronize federal agency operational plans.³ This is evident in both the Integrated Planning System (IPS) and the National Response Framework (NRF) where both documents highlight the importance of horizontal and vertical coordination and synchronization but do not provide a mechanism to implement these processes effectively. Likewise, the IPS interagency standard operating procedures (SOP) requirement to submit plans for posting into the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) does not establish a synchronization process or structure (U.S. Department of Homeland

¹ According to the CPG 101, the purpose of operational planning is to provide a framework for tactical level plans and operations.

² Among these: 9/11 Commission Report, The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina—Lessons Learned, 38, reports from the Government Accountability Office, numerous Congressional Research Service reports on both subjects, and several publications, reports and opeds on both subjects from prominent think tanks like the Center for International Strategic Studies, Heritage Foundation, Markle Foundation, Project for National Security Reform, etc.

³ For simplicity, the document uses agency and department interchangeably unless specifically noted.

Security, 2009). This lack of a process or structure to coordinate and synchronize plans creates a void at the operational level, leaving the Secretary of Homeland Security responsible for coordination, but with no means to assess and synchronize federal agency plans adequately. Fundamentally, the federal government does not have a viable system for operational planning that provides a reasonable assurance that the departments and agencies have, and can provide the capabilities required during single or multiple national catastrophes.

This void in the federal planning system can have severe consequences on the national preparedness and response posture during multiple catastrophic incidents because the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has no means to identify available capabilities and the potential gaps, overlaps and duplication of these capabilities until an incident happens. In this void, DHS has the daunting task of coordinating federal preparedness and response efforts without the knowledge of other federal agencies' plans, capabilities and milestones. Notwithstanding, the 911 Commission, the Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned, numerous General Accounting Office (GAO) reports and recent reviews by the Obama Administration highlighting federal planning problems, no documented evidence exists that indicates this problem has been fixed. On the contrary, the lack of progress on developing operational plans for the National Planning Scenarios (NPS), and the fact that the Administration placed a moratorium on catastrophic planning, indicate that under the current construct, DHS cannot effectively drive the federal operational planning efforts.⁴ Complicating this matter is the fact that at the federal level, considerable confusion exists regarding who is in charge, which responsibilities are borne by what agencies, and whether assets and capabilities are guaranteed or merely potentially available for NPS level catastrophes (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 3).

This void affecting the federal operational planning efforts is significant because it has impaired the ability of the federal government to develop the

⁴ Both DHS and DOD planners stated to the author that planning was halted by the DRG.

required NPS plans to prepare for major national catastrophes. The evidence that the system is not working is obvious; four years have passed since the NPS list was published and only one required plan, the Terrorist Use of Explosives CONPLAN, has been completed (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009). Even though the fifteen scenarios were grouped into eight sets to simplify planning and significant, progress was made developing strategic plans and guidance, the operational planning effort continues to lag. At the present rate, it can take years to finish all the concept and operational plans.

The federal government continues to struggle in developing effectively coordinated, measured and validated plans. GAO findings indicate that, in some cases, stakeholders were not involved in the planning; plans were not linked to other relevant plans; there was no system to track progress; and plans did not provide a method for accountability. It also found that DHS has not yet developed comprehensive operational plans and metrics to coordinate federal response resources (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007, p. II).

The cause of these problems is not at the strategic level since the federal government has a formal interagency process to develop policies, strategies and guidance that provide overarching direction to the departments and have been reasonably coordinated using the established national security process (Whittaker, Smith, & McKune, 2008, pp. 25–31).⁵ These documents are the collective product of the interagency process and apply to all federal departments. In contrast, operational plans are developed independently by every department to identify detailed resource, personnel and asset allocation to achieve the objectives of the strategic level documents (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. 5–1). Generally, while one strategic document exists per scenario, there can be up to 30 associated operational plans from all the agencies that have homeland security responsibilities. Thus, the real issue is at the operational level where the IPS did not establish a system to coordinate,

⁵ Every administration uses its own process. President Bush's guidelines were published in NSPD-1, President Obama's in PPD1.

synchronize and validate agency plans. This void affecting the federal operational planning efforts is significant because it has impaired the ability of the federal government to develop the required NPS plans to prepare for major national catastrophes; primarily, because the governance framework relies on individual federal departments to develop these plans and approve them based on their own interpretation of law and presidential guidance.⁶

2. Problems with the Status Quo

This existing framework creates significant problems for preparedness and operations. First, it does not establish a process for measuring agency plans for compliance with national strategies and concept plans. Second, it creates an environment where plans are developed in-house without a process to integrate or cross-level capabilities among agencies. Finally, it does not establish a system where agency capabilities can be screened to identify potential gaps or duplication.

Although DHS has the lead for coordination, it does not have the authority to drive the process of other agencies and ensure the harmonization of operational plans for an integrated federal response. In other words, DHS has no way to ensure that the “parts” are up to specifications (plans are in compliance), have the appropriate “fit” (validation) and are delivered in the required timelines, quality and quantities (synchronization) to be able to produce the desired operational and tactical effects. These problems lead to other issues, such as the absence of a federal inventory of capabilities and a process to ensure that their development is consistent with strategies and plans (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 10). This may be the reason why it is so difficult for the federal government to identify gaps and duplication of effort in many operational areas. The result is that the current planning system leaves validation of operational plans to the moment when an actual catastrophe occurs.

⁶ Both HSPDs 5 and 8 include caveats in this regard.

In essence, the current federal framework for disaster preparedness does not adequately address the operational planning, coordination and synchronization problems for national level single or multiple major catastrophes.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Primary Question

How can the federal government organize to coordinate and synchronize homeland security operational planning effectively?

2. Secondary Questions

What is the current federal government construct for synchronizing and coordinating homeland security operational planning and is it effective?

What are the systemic strengths and weaknesses that affect the effectiveness of the federal planning and capabilities under the current construct?

Are there any insights from international approaches that could be adapted to optimize the federal system?

D. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the federal operational planning system and to propose an alternative approach to optimize the system in response to the Government Accounting Office (GAO) 10-123 report. It states that “DoD has its own operational plans for CBRNE consequence management but is unable to fully integrate them with other federal government plans because other federal departments and agencies have not completed all elements of the Integrated Planning System mandated by Presidential directive in December 2007” (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 3). Given that five of the eight National Planning Scenarios are CBRNE driven, this thesis seeks to improve the system to facilitate integration of plans between federal partners and the Department of Defense (DoD).

E. METHODOLOGY

This thesis uses a combination of the case study and comparative analysis methods to examine the federal operational planning system and to gain insights about international approaches to emergency planning that can be applied in the United States. The case study was selected because most assessments of the federal planning system do not make a distinction between strategic and operational planning systems. Therefore, to obtain a better understanding of how well the system is performing, it is necessary to examine operational planning as a critical function. The case study describes the federal operational planning system and examines the governance structure to assess its performance using four parameters: outcomes, alignment, efficiency and effectiveness.⁷ The “quality” of the plans, strategies and policies is not within the scope of this thesis because they are the subject of a robust national debate and are the core purpose for numerous reform proposals (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. CRS-1).

- Outcomes: capacity to meet the requirements set by national policies and strategies to generate the required plans for major catastrophes. This criterion uses the requirements set by HSPD-8 and the National Planning Scenarios to assess whether the current system is performing as desired.
- Efficiency: capacity to optimize the utilization of federal resources. This criterion examines whether a process or system exists that compensates for the disparity in maturity and resource levels of planning systems among the federal departments by pooling resources, establishing milestones and maintaining visibility over the development of department plans.
- Alignment: ability to ensure that operational plans are consistent with strategy and policy objectives. This assessment establishes if a process for a qualitative review of department plans at the interagency level exists that checks alignment and established standards. It also assesses whether current responsibilities provide sufficient authority to drive alignment in the Interagency.

⁷ Idea for the methodology was derived from the PNSR study Forging a New Shield, 2008.

- Effectiveness: a systemic approach to the coordination and synchronization of operational plans. This is the most critical element of the criteria and the one that carries the most weight. Synchronization of plans has to include a process that accounts for the optimal integration of capabilities that result in the reduction of gaps and duplication in terms of timing, space and purpose. The analysis of this element determines whether the system has a process that drives horizontal and vertical integration.

In addition to this criterion, the thesis considers the effects of other variables on the system. In the area of operational planning, the capabilities among the federal departments are not homogeneous. Thus, in terms of interagency operational planning, any construct must address existing disparities in planning resources, experience, processes and expertise.

The comparative analysis examine the emergency planning governance structures of Canada, Ireland and New Zealand to assess whether some of their emergency planning systems offer potential modifications that can be useful to improve the U.S. operational planning system.

These countries were selected because they are representative of three different governance systems for emergency planning with specific authorities: overarching department, separation of planning and operational functions and multi-sector integration. The analysis examines authorities, organization and processes of emergency planning at the national level to gain insights for application in the United States. The result of this analysis is a proposal for a structural change to reorganize the federal operational planning system.

F. THESIS OUTLINE

- Chapter II provides a thorough analysis of the pertinent literature that has an impact on the federal operational planning system. It examines the literature that established the governance framework, as well as that evaluating its effectiveness and associated reform proposals.

- Chapter III is a case study of the federal operational planning system that includes its history, structure, processes and provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses resident in the system.
- Chapter IV is a comparative analysis of selected international emergency planning structures that identifies principles for application in the United States. These principles are analyzed in the context of the federal operational planning system to determine if a new alternative can be developed to improve the current federal system.
- Chapter V presents a new structure for the federal planning system.
- Chapter VI provides conclusions to the research project, identifies future areas of research and gives closing thoughts.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. BACKGROUND

The subject of homeland security has fielded in a relatively short time a large compendium of publications that seek to provide an understanding of the complex and dynamic environment ushered in by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In this regard, it is possible to argue that Hurricane Katrina, without the context of 9/11, would have been just another Hurricane Andrew. In other words, it was surely catastrophic, but not enough in and of itself to usher in significant changes in the literature and, more importantly, in government organization. The context of 9/11 brought the realization that a disaster of the scale of Hurricane Katrina inflicted by terrorists or nature could, in fact, bring the nation to its knees. In light of the understanding of the significance of these dangers, countless publications have appeared advocating reform of the National and Homeland Security systems. Many of these focus on terrorism, others focus on intelligence and a number of them analyze the federal organization for prevention, preparedness and response.

A general consensus exists in the literature that a dire need to improve interagency planning, collaboration, coordination and information sharing for homeland security among the federal departments is necessary. The 9/11 terrorist attacks started a trend in the literature that focused on the federal interagency system and this trend was further galvanized by the perceived failures of the federal government in responding to the Katrina disaster. The literature in this realm falls in two general categories: 1) federal government publications that provide a governance framework (legislation, directives, strategies, plans, etc.), and 2) publications that analyze the effectiveness of the governance framework (GAO, CRS, think tanks, academics, practitioners, etc.).

B. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Federal government publications provide the framework in which to study the government's homeland security organization, processes and structures. In the legislative arena, Congress attempted to reform the Federal Government by enacting two key pieces of legislation: the 2002 *Homeland Security Act* and the 2006 *Emergency Management Reform Act*. These acts set the framework for the federal government's national and homeland security organization and processes in the Post-9/11 and Post-Katrina era. Most of the current literature focuses on improving or adding to these acts since the core theme is the need to supplement their mandates to resolve systemic organization, collaboration and process shortcomings appropriately. These deficiencies are thought to be the cause of the federal government's failures when preparing and responding to major catastrophes. Some experts argue that the statutes and follow-on directives have generated some of the confusion and problems that the federal government experiences in homeland security operations (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, pp. 3–10).

The Executive Branch under the Bush Administration was prolific in publishing numerous directives, strategies and plans for developing a top to bottom framework on how the nation prepares and responds to disasters and incidents of national significance. The Bush Administration led this effort with the publication of *Homeland Security Presidential Directives Five* (HSPD-5) and *Eight* (HSPD-8). HSPD-5 designates the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security as the principal federal official for domestic incident management and makes him responsible for coordinating federal operations within the United States to prepare for, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies (Bush, HSPD-5, 2003). It also directs the development of a *National Response Plan* (NRP) and a *National Incident Management System* (NIMS) that seeks to standardize command

structures across jurisdictions.⁸ The NIMS and NRP, now the *National Response Framework* (NRF), seek to align all levels of government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to work together for an all hazards response. The NIMS provides the template for the management of incidents, while the NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008, p. 1).

HSPD-8 further designates the DHS Secretary as the principal federal official for coordinating the implementation of all-hazards preparedness in the United States (Bush, HSPD-8, 2003). It was supplemented four years later by the publication of Annex I, which set in motion the development of the Integrated Planning System (IPS) published in 2009 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). The IPS seeks to convert policies, strategies and planning guidance into a family of strategic, operational and tactical plans (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. 1-1). The IPS and HSPD-1 virtually guarantee that all the Strategic Guidance Statements, Strategic Plans and Concept Plans (CONPLANS) produced by the Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT) in the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning at DHS and in the Operational Planning Branch of FEMA's (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Disaster Operations Directorate are fully coordinated with full interagency participation.⁹ Although these directives generated a great deal of activity at the federal level that produced a number of strategic documents and plans, they did not solve the coordination and synchronization problems among federal agencies (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 11).

In addition to these documents, the federal government published several key strategies that seek to provide direction and guidance to the Homeland

⁸ NRP was superseded by the National Response Framework (NRF) on January 2008.

⁹ The IPS provides a detailed description of the coordination process. HSPD-1 is the Bush Administration's directive that structures the IA process for homeland security. President Obama rescinded HSPD-1 with Presidential Policy Directive One (PPD-1) which consolidated the NSC and the HSC staffs and established the IA process for his administration. FEMA is responsible for developing federal CONPLANS.

Security community. Among these, *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*, *the National Strategy for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets* and *the National Strategy for Maritime Security*, seek to provide the federal departments the strategic context and direction for their roles in the security and protection of the homeland. However, all the Executive Branch documents are based on the premise that federal agencies have the required planning capabilities, voluntarily comply and effectively develop programs to enhance interagency collaboration, coordination, information sharing and planning efforts. While there is a high emphasis in collaboration and integration, the failure to address the “how” serves to preserve and encourage departmental autonomy. For instance, there a conspicuous absence of a process to establish clear strategy-to-task links (end-to-end). Nor is there a compliance framework that measures whether the federal departments are meeting requirements established by policy and strategy in the development of their programs. Lastly, no structure exists to ensure that federal department programs are synchronized to maximize capabilities and minimize duplication of efforts and gaps in homeland security activities. Throughout the documents, there is no thought of modernizing the organizational structures of the federal departments to optimize capabilities and minimize the traditional “stovepipes.”

On the contrary, the plans produced in this system place the responsibility for developing, coordinating and synchronizing operational plans squarely on the shoulders of each department. They are given the responsibility in their own terms to perform these functions with other federal departments and non-federal jurisdictions. The system has produced five strategic guidance statements, four strategic plans and a single CONPLAN, which seek to provide guidance and identify roles and responsibilities for the federal departments (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 100). Typically, these documents do not include any metrics of performance other than listing the tasks expected from the departments including developing operational plans for each scenario. In essence, these documents are an extension of the loose governance system

described above, which assumes that multiple departments have an equal capability and drive to meet these requirements.¹⁰ The Obama Administration in its first year in office has not radically altered the system.

A good number of senior officials in the administration were members of prominent think tanks and academic institutions with bona fide credentials and expertise in the area of homeland security. Thus, it is not surprising that the administration placed a moratorium on NPS catastrophic planning to provide maneuver space while it re-examines the policies, processes and structures of the Homeland Security Enterprise. The administration directed the consolidation of the national security and homeland security staffs. It is also working on developing new strategies for National and Homeland Security that shape the strategic and operational environments. DHS conducted its first ever Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR), which indicates that the administration intends to revise HSPD-8 and the IPS. The purpose of the recently published QHSR is to “outline a framework to guide the activities of participants in homeland security toward a common end” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. iii). It signals that the administration intends to broaden the focus beyond terrorism, develop a new homeland security planning system, and expand the role of non-federal stakeholders. The administration’s potential review of HSPD-8 and the IPS may not significantly change current planning structures but could place less weight on the national planning scenarios. Both the QHSR and ongoing review efforts recognize that states, private sector and non-governmental organizations are essential for planning but do not outline a way ahead for their full integration into the federal planning system. In essence, the direction seems to lean towards more governance at the federal level that preserves the traditional autonomy of the departments in developing operational plans.

¹⁰ Author analysis of tasks in the documents produced to date. These documents are FOUO will not be cited in this thesis.

It is possible that the Obama administration's approach can be an improvement over the current federal operational planning system. However, as discussed below, governance that relies in voluntary compliance without structures and processes does not have a great track record. In effect, the record shows that core problems persist as demonstrated by the reoccurring findings of most investigations and assessments conducted by organizations that examined federal performance.

The federal planning system currently resides within the structure of the national security system and in parallel to the intelligence community. The statutes and a long list of executive orders and presidential directives established over the years the framework from which the present structures evolved.¹¹ Significant among them and having direct relevance to this thesis are President Carter's Executive Order (EO) 12148, which established the Federal Emergency Management Agency and President Bush's EO 13354 that established the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC). FEMA was the originator of the first Federal Response Plan coordinated and signed by all agencies with disaster response responsibility (U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1992). This document later became the National Response Plan that took the federal government to Katrina. These documents are the core structure of the federal response system that remains in place today. The creation of the NCTC is relevant because both the executive order and the statute that created it, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (ITRPA) of 2004, established a new structure responsible for the coordination and synchronization of the intelligence community strategic operational planning for counter terrorism. NCTC's planning efforts include broad, strategic plans, such as the landmark National Implementation Plan for the War on Terror (NIP). First approved by the President in June 2006 and then again in September 2008, the NIP is the USG's comprehensive and evolving strategic plan to implement national counter terrorism (CT) priorities into concerted interagency action (U.S. National Counter

¹¹ For a complete list, see FAS.org.

Terrorism Center). While these documents are classified, they are indicative of an evolving coordination and synchronization structure in one of the most challenging stovepipe communities.

C. PUBLICATIONS THAT ANALYZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

In 2006, DHS led a comprehensive review of the national planning system to determine the status of catastrophic plans in the states, territories and urban areas in response to mandates from a presidential directive and legislation. The review concluded the current status of plans and planning gives grounds for significant national concern. Current catastrophic planning is unsystematic and not linked within a national planning system. This is incompatible with 21st century homeland security challenges, and reflects a systemic problem: outmoded planning processes, products, and tools are primary contributors to the inadequacy of catastrophic planning. The results of the review support the need for a fundamental modernization of the U.S.'s planning processes (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2006, p. viii). This study informed the blitz of activity that led to the development of the current federal governance framework that attempted to solve the catastrophic planning problems in the homeland security system.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has published hundreds of reports assessing the effectiveness of the federal departments and programs in the area of homeland security.¹² Key among these, are those reports that highlight a reoccurring theme addressing problems of command structures, coordination, collaboration, and information sharing. In his testimony before the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight, Committee on Homeland Security, William O. Jenkins, Jr., Director GAO's Homeland Security and Justice, summarized the findings of several GAO engagements that identified shortcomings on leadership roles, planning,

¹² See www.GAO.gov, key word: Homeland Security. Note: a search of homeland security in the title yielded 273 reports.

coordination and the inventory of federal capabilities for major disasters. GAO contends that effective federal preparation for and response to such an event requires planning, coordination, cooperation, and leadership within DHS and between DHS and other federal agencies—civilian and military—as well as state and local governments, and the private and nonprofit sectors, which have resources and capabilities needed for the response (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 2). Most recently, GAO in addressing Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Explosives (CBRNE) planning stated that DoD has its own CBRNE consequence management plans but has not integrated them with other federal plans because those federal entities have not completed all elements of the Integrated Planning System mandated by Presidential directive in December 2007 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 3).

While GAO has appropriately identified these problem areas, its recommendations for improvement tend to be open-ended and not systematic. For instance, addressing the lack of clarity in leadership roles and inadequacy of plans for pandemic influenza GAO recommends: (1) DHS and Health and Human Services (HHS) develop rigorous testing, training, and exercises for pandemic influenza to ensure that federal leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, understood, and work effectively, and (2) the HSC set a time frame to update the plan, involve key nonfederal stakeholders, and more fully address the characteristics of an effective national strategy (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007). GAO supports the “Lead Agency” model of federal organization and assumes that the current structures and systems of the federal government are adequate and place high emphasis on more agency collaboration and exercising to solve these issues. However, their own findings indicate that the model is ineffective because DHS does not have the authority to direct action or compliance from other federal departments.¹³

¹³ Only the President has that authority, see IPS, p. 3.

Similarly, the Executive Branch's assessment of the federal response during Hurricane Katrina identifies analogous shortcomings as GAO and makes the same assumptions when proposing its 125 recommendations. The federal response to Hurricane Katrina, Lessons Learned report concludes that insufficient planning, training, and interagency coordination are not problems that began and ended with Hurricane Katrina. The storm demonstrated the need for greater integration and synchronization of preparedness efforts, not only throughout the federal government, but also with the state and local governments and the private and non-profit sectors as well (U.S. Executive Office of the President, 2006, p. 50). However, the report's 125 recommendations support the concept of "Lead Agency," the independence of federal departments to develop their own plans, and giving DHS the difficult task to coordinate their action without a change in authorities or establishing mechanisms for compliance. Furthermore, the recommendations further muddle leadership roles and authorities by proposing new leadership roles and authorities for federal department coordinating officers. Both the GAO and Lessons Learned reports aptly describe the conditions that afflict the national Homeland Security structures but their solution set tends to stay within the confines of the stovepipe system of the traditional federal departments. None of the reports offers any novel or drastic solutions to a complex and demanding problem; that job is left to think tanks and academia.

A substantial number of authoritative experts who advocate a wide range of proposals that address the weaknesses and gaps of the federal operational planning system has further developed the analysis of the governance framework of the national security system. Most solution sets range from the strategic realignment of authorities and power at the federal level to the implementation of novel organizational models for national and homeland security. While there seems to be a consensus that interagency challenges exist at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, most proposals take a unitary approach in trying to apply fixes and recommendations across the board.

Among those advocating for a strategic realignment of authorities and power are three major publications exerting considerable influence in the debate on how to fix the federal homeland security challenges. The Project for National Security Reform (PNSR) massive report *Forging a New Shield and Turning Ideas into Action*, and the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) Beyond Goldwater-Nichols (BG-N) project provide a comprehensive assessment of the shortcomings and strengths of the National and Homeland Security systems and make significant recommendations from a group of luminaries in the academic, government and practitioner fields.¹⁴ Both PNSR reports focus major fixes at the strategic level by proposing the modification of the National Security Council structure, increasing the authority of the national security staff and creating a variety of interagency structures in an attempt to reduce the complexity and span of control of the national security system.

The PNSR goes further than the CSIS Project by proposing Congressional reform to align committees with the recommended national security changes. The study cautions about an “à la carte approach to reform” since the “themes and recommendations are dependent on each other for their effectiveness no less than a building’s foundation, superstructure and functional systems must be conceived as an aggregate for any part of it to work as intended” (Project for National Security Reform, 2008). In all fairness, the PNSR does not underestimate the uphill battle that such a momentous change can produce. In their own words:

The sweeping recommendations made here will require careful and progressive implementation, yet all too often reform proposals are offered and adopted without due attention to the innumerable difficulties that arise during implementation. For example, a Congressional Research Services review of past reorganizations leading up to the formation of the Department of Homeland Security found that in most cases,—serious concern with implementation [was] typically too little and too late. An advisor to PNSR with over thirty years of experience in organizational reforms advised that all

¹⁴ Several of which are occupying key positions in the Obama Administration.

of her experience taught that the success or failure of organizational reforms boils down to sustained and attentive implementation. Not yet knowing whether or how Congress and the president might adopt the recommendations offered here, we can only identify general principles for effective implementation, beginning with careful attention to our nation's constitutional framework. (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 600)

PNSR's *Turning Ideas into Action* seeks to establish a practical path for the Obama Administration to implement the overhaul of the national security system. In this report, PNSR re-emphasizes the systemic deficiencies in the national security system, including homeland security, which in their view has not been resolved. Their list is long:

The current system is built of disjointed stovepipes that don't connect sufficiently well to address complex problems. The results are predictable. Crisis management takes precedence over long-term strategic management. Redundancy and turf wars among agencies preclude whole-of-government approaches. Individual departmental missions take precedence over national missions. National strategy and planning guidance are missing. Resources and priorities are misaligned. Interagency cooperation is not encouraged. Diverse subcultures, incompatible protocols, and outdated technologies prohibit information sharing. Congressional oversight is fragmented. (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. iii)

PNSR outlines the building blocks of reform, implementation initiatives, and specific steps the nation must take to move from the national security system it has to the national security system it needs (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. ii). Nevertheless, their streamlined recommendations from *Forging a New Shield* can still require a major effort involving the Executive Branch and Congress. Both these reports included comprehensive sections on homeland security and proposed a number of recommendations that aligned with their overall vision of a modern national security system. These sections, in turn, were refined by their December 2009 *Recalibrating the System* report, which concluded that catastrophic operational planning is at the crux of the National Preparedness System. PNSR recognized that the system has been steadily

improving, specifically at the regional level, which led them to conclude that catastrophic planning should focus on evolving regional efforts (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. 5). The PNSR recommendations, no matter how they are cut, requires major muscle movements in the Executive and legislative branches. Dr. Richard W. Stewart argues that finding a permanent interagency solution like a Goldwater-Nichols Act for the interagency is, if not impossible, a least very, very hard (Stewart, 2008, p. 162). Besides the obvious resistance from Congress to reform itself, the dysfunctional structure created by the founding fathers and the lack of an homogenous culture among the federal departments pose near insurmountable obstacles to implementation. Even if their regional catastrophic planning proposals were adopted, the problem at the federal level would not be fixed.

In contrast, the CSIS study, while advocating similar large-scale changes in the national security system, is more dependent on executive branch directed governance than legislative action. Like PNSR, they recommend significantly strengthening the National Security Council since, in their view, unity of effort requires coordination from the top, the BG-N study team recast the National Security Council (NSC) from its traditional role of preparing decisions for the President to more active involvement in ensuring that Presidential intent is realized through USG actions. A stronger NSC role in providing policy oversight during planning and execution, however, does not mean that the NSC staff should be involved in the conduct of operations. Rather, the study team recommends that the NSC establish a new NSC Senior Director and office responsible for developing the Presidential guidance for complex contingency operations and ensuring that interagency planning for these operations is fully integrated. One of the most important initial responsibilities of this new office would be to develop and codify a standard approach to interagency planning at the strategic level (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005, p. 8).

This view is reflected as well in the in the area of homeland security planning, where their follow-on report, *Managing the Next Catastrophe*,

recommends the creation of a Senior Director of Strategic Planning at the NSC and the establishment of a “robust interagency organization overseen by the NSC but housed at DHS” (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 10). The viability and effectiveness of these recommendations is doubtful. First, executive action does not permanently institutionalize the structures with adequate authorities; second, as the PNSR argues, increasing the span of control of the NSC leads to inefficiencies in the system unless substantial changes take place; and third, the assumption that the NSC as structured has the power and authority to exercise leadership over autonomous and highly independent federal departments is questionable (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 166).

While all these proposals may have merit for a much-needed overhaul of the national security system, their complexity and scope can require years if not decades to implement. Needless to say, an overhaul on this scale and complexity can likely generate an emotional and protracted debate as the one experienced by health care reform legislation since it also challenges traditional sources of power, resources and more importantly, budgets. The unitary approach to solving issues across the spectrum (strategic, operational and tactical) may not resolve the short to mid-term operational level issues of planning, collaboration, coordination and information sharing among the departments. Furthermore, these reports tend to preserve the autonomy of federal departments and rely on voluntary cooperation as a way ahead, which is the crux of problem. While these reports seek to reform the national and homeland security systems, a few publications propose using operational models for a variety of missions in homeland security.

This school of thought has its origin in military Senior Service Colleges where officers are trained on the operational and strategic levels of war. Therefore, it follows that the Combatant Command and the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) models are the center of these proposals. The problem with this type of literature is that it tends to militarize a complex and dynamic environment consisting of multiple federal departments that cannot and will not

submit to a military style chain of command. Additionally, these conceptual constructs apply a good example of interagency cooperation outside the United States without addressing the significant structural, cultural and legislative barriers for implementation in the homeland. Thus, they tend to oversimplify the complex interagency system and its functional challenges in the homeland. It is not that these models cannot be applied, the issue that needs to be addressed is one of scope and focus. Colonels Sami Said and Cameron Holt illustrate this point effectively in their article “A Time for Action - the Case for Interagency Deliberate Planning” (Said & Holt, 2008). Although their article focuses on the National Security System and U.S. Foreign Policy, it makes the case that the interagency collaboration and coordination problems can be solved by establishing a deliberate planning system. They illustrate that most of the approaches described above have significant barriers for implementation and may not be achievable. In their analysis, the most viable and obtainable fix is to develop a system that brings the federal departments together to develop the nation’s plans. This approach is further justified by organizational literature that advocates horizontal or hybrid organizations for complex or dynamic environments (Burkle & Hayden, 2001).

D. OTHER LITERATURE OF INFLUENCE

The literature advocating for the reform and modernization of the intelligence community is as abundant and diverse as that addressing the ills of the national homeland security system. Since 9/11, the calls for reform of the intelligence community have also gained momentum and a community of interest is advocating for its modernization. Key among these is the Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security for the Information Age. The task force produced a series of reports mostly focused on information sharing and intelligence. They highlighted systemic deficiencies in the system at various levels and provided recommendations for improvement. Significant to this thesis, is their April 2009 report *Reforming the Culture of National Security*, which did not support the restructuring of the national security architecture, advocating

instead, for a transformation in culture that encourages and rewards integration of information sharing and interagency collaboration (Markle Foundation, 2009). Their recommendations include clarification of roles and responsibilities, focus collaboration and information sharing, creation and institutionalization of accountability mechanisms, and the clear delineation of authorities and responsibility (Markle Foundation, 2009). In essence, their recommendation seems to advocate for stronger leadership roles in the system, as well as more effective governance.

On the other hand, some authors have argued that organizational structure matters and question whether the intelligence agencies built for a different enemy at a different time can adapt to the current threat environment (Zegart, 2007, p. 197). In their discussion, several authors note that the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is a positive development, but not without challenges, for increasing the coordination and synchronization of counter terrorism planning. Key among these challenges is the lack of adequate authorities for the NCTC to fulfill its mission. Amy Zegart, in her book, *Spying Blind* highlights the turf battles within the intelligence community that led to a wither-down IRTPA, and thus, a weakened NCTC. Brian R. Reinwald in *Assessing the National Counterterrorism Center's Effectiveness in the Global War on Terror* posits that the lack of appropriate authorities affected the NCTC's ability to perform in an effective manner the mission assigned by IRTPA. He concluded that the United States requires a single federal entity focused on GWOT (Global War on Terror) counterterrorism strategy with the necessary authorities to integrate intelligence, conduct comprehensive interagency planning, compel specific action when required, and coordinate and synchronize the elements of national power for successful operations (Reinwald, 2007, p. 15). The literature in the intelligence highlights similar systemic challenges to those affecting the homeland security system. Specifically, the issue of authorities is highly relevant since their lack-of usually constrain the effectiveness of interagency organizations. Chapter V, in particular, explores this area.

In the psychology field, growing evidence exists that supports the adoption of interagency structures for homeland security. Douglas Paton and John Violanti make a compelling case that joint planning activities are necessary to reduce the risk of stress during disasters or terrorist incidents. In their own words, “extensive joint planning in conjunction with team work activity involving collaborating agencies can reduce the risk of experiencing adverse stress outcomes, particularly when responding in a multiagency context” (Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2007, p. 239). A reoccurring problem during major disasters is the unintentional lack of information sharing or as Joseph W. Pfeifer calls it, “stovepipe situational awareness,” that result in a general lack of understanding of the capabilities, plans and intentions among the federal agencies (Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2007, p. 208). Gaps and overlaps of capabilities are the first manifestation on the ground that precedes the unraveling of well-intentioned plans. As agency plans fail to achieve the synergy required of a multi-sector response, it creates huge challenges that must be solved on the fly under enormous pressures. In the psychological realm, interagency planning provides maneuver room to overcome the complexity, scale and uncertainty of mega disasters without the pressures and timelines of life and death decisions that can quickly overwhelm human capacity.

A developing genre is developing in the literature that advocates the shift from interagency planning to multi-sector planning. This school of thought is perfectly exemplified by the book *Megacommunities: How Leaders of Government, Business and Non-Profits Can Tackle Today's Global Challenges Together* and New Zealand's doctrinal publications for emergency management (Gerencser, Van Lee, Napolitano, & Kelly, 2008).¹⁵ The central premise is that the complexities, interrelationships and scale of the modern environment are of such magnitude that government solutions are not adequate to respond to challenges. Therefore, the government must enter a partnership with the private

¹⁵ See Civil Defense Emergency Management (CDEM) at http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/For-the-CDEM-Sector-Publications-Index?OpenDocument

sector and civil society to ensure the development of holistic solutions to problems that optimize the collective employment of capabilities.¹⁶ The emphasis in the QHSR report to integrate non-federal jurisdictions and NGOs is evidence that this idea seems to be gaining some traction in the United States as well.

Lastly, a literature review in this subject area would be incomplete without considering the writings of the two former Secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security. Both Tom Ridge and Michael Chertoff provide interesting insights on the struggles faced by DHS as it grew as the newest department of the federal government. What makes their books interesting is the fact that both secretaries helped create a system that assumes that the DHS must lead and influence the national planning efforts. Their accounts suggest that DHS role is to lead other departments in matters of homeland security. Thus, it is not news that both secretaries eagerly protected this role by presiding over a system that utilized a top-down approach in their relationships with non-federal jurisdictions and paid little attention to the latent capabilities of the private sector and NGO's. As discussed before, DHS under their administration was repeatedly criticized by GAO for failing to include non-federal stakeholders in the development of plans.

E. ASSESSMENT OF THE LITERATURE

As previously seen, extensive literature exists about the federal development of the federal homeland security structure. A large portion of this literature consists of federal publications that seek to provide a structure for a complex and dynamic system. The vast federal governance data provides a window by which to assess the planning system's organization, structure and processes, as well as the policy and strategic objectives that they seek to achieve. The literature that documents the "ills" and recommendations for improvement is equally extensive. The government self-assessments document system shortcomings and propose solutions within the current organizational

¹⁶ In this context, it includes Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), associations, and any organization that can be a potential stakeholder.

framework of the federal system. Typically, they are the post mortem of catastrophic events where the federal government did not perform as expected. These assessments have led to the reorganization of the government and the creation of new structures for addressing the failures discovered or perceived after the incident. Examples of these are the creation of FEMA, DHS, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the NCTC. Clearly, the reorganizations, past and present, have not solved the problems that led to their creation. On the contrary, their missteps over the years are well documented and have generated a virtual cottage industry for government reform.

The advocates of reform are as numerous as their number of proposals for improving the national security system, which makes consensus difficult to achieve. Most of this literature focuses on broad reform that can be difficult to achieve and result in protracted timeless battles while the stakeholders vie to retain power and control over resources. Conversely, the few short-term organizational proposals in the literature are not optimal because they seek to establish a command and control system over an interagency structure. These initiatives are a poison pill for federal departments because it requires them to forfeit authorities and resources. The trials and tribulations of the intelligence community are worth considering as it has been battling similar issues since the interagency system was created. The literature documenting the NCTC provides some potential organizational ideas to apply for catastrophic planning. Substantial data exists to back the criticism levied upon the federal planning system. The proposals for reform are equally substantiated by an extensive case study data that documents what works and what does not. The challenge of reform, especially an overhaul, becomes a matter of achieving a general consensus, developing momentum for change, and making it happen before the next mega-catastrophe strikes. Considering that the Goldwater-Nichols Act is a result of decades of debate on the organization of the defense establishment, it is appropriate; no, it is imperative other options are studied to achieve the same goals in shorter time spans for the good of the nation.

III. THE FEDERAL PLANNING SYSTEM

Unfortunately, today's efforts to provide homeland security, particularly at the federal level, are not unlike the governmental equivalent of a children's soccer game. One can see a tremendous amount of activity under way and considerable energy on the field, but the movements are often not very well coordinated. Players tend to huddle around the ball—in this case, whatever happens to be the crisis or headline issue of the day—and follow it wherever it goes, even if in doing so they neglect their assigned positions. In such an environment, it is not impossible to score a goal, but that outcome is usually due more to luck than to skill. (CSIS Managing the Next Catastrophe, Ready (or Not?)

A. HISTORY

It took the global scale of a world war and several strategic failures for the United States to realize that the 19th century federal structure was not up to the tasks of the 20th century. The hard lessons of World War II and the emerging conflict between the free world and communism led Congress to codify an interagency structure to serve as a consultative body to coordinate national strategic policy and intelligence efforts (Whittaker, Smith, & McKune, 2008, p. 7). The 1947 National Security Act that established the national security system created the National Security Council (NSC). During the Cold War, the NSC became the structure responsible for coordinating and synchronizing U.S. policy and strategy but it left operational planning as the domain of the federal departments. The primary focus of the national security system was external while domestically, the President relied on the cabinet meetings to address issues in the homeland. The March 1979 Three Mile Island (TMI) disaster was the starting point for a nascent domestic interagency process to attempt to coordinate and synchronize the emergency response efforts of multiple federal agencies in the homeland.

Before Three Mile Island, federal emergency and disaster activities were fragmented and distributed across numerous agencies (U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009). Unlike typical reoccurring disasters (hurricanes,

earthquakes, floods, etc.), which confined federal efforts to supplementing state and local relief activities, the TMI nuclear incident opened a Pandora's Box of consequences, complexities and challenges that shook the notions of federal emergency preparedness. The nation had suffered many disasters before, but TMI, while not a major disaster per se, surfaced the specter of a potential nuclear catastrophe in the homeland and thoroughly tested the federal system by demonstrating a need for coordinated action among multiple federal departments and non-federal entities. The underlying problem was a lack of attention at the federal and state levels to plan and prepare for disasters of this scale (Miskel, 2006, p. 73). As a result President Carter issued Executive Order 12148, which gave FEMA the responsibility to "establish federal policies for, and coordinate, all civil defense and civil emergency planning, management, mitigation, and assistance functions of Executive agencies" (Carter, 1979). TMI was the proverbial "aha" moment that made the federal government assume a more vigorous and proactive approach towards emergency planning and establish a system for coordination of preparedness efforts (Miskel, 2006, p. 63).

This approach solely rested on the shoulders of FEMA since it did not have specific authorities to evaluate and integrate federal planning efforts. Departments were expected to develop their own plans based on their own statutory responsibilities and priorities. In the 1980s, FEMA developed a series of plans for catastrophic earthquakes that later would become the blueprint for future Federal Response Plans (Miskel, 2006, p. 11). These plans sought to assign responsibility to multiple agencies and coordinate federal response. The decade was good to FEMA since not all of the disasters in the United States were of significant magnitude and scale to challenge the federal response. Thus, FEMA's ability to coordinate federal emergency planning efforts of the federal government remained untested until Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew. Both storms were perceived as a federal failure and thoroughly tarnished FEMA's reputation as it was held responsible for the poor coordination and synchronization of the federal response. Even though by the time Andrew rolled ashore FEMA had a

Federal Response Plan signed by 27 head of agencies, the plan was generally ignored in practice by most of the responsible agencies (Miskel, 2006, p. 83).

FEMA, as the sole agency responsible for preparedness and response, became the target of political attacks and was the subject of outrage from local officials, senators and congressmen (Kamen, 2008). The post-mortem reports from GAO and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) coupled with the perceived inability of FEMA to perform, rekindled once again political pressures to improve the federal emergency management system. At the time, the problem of interagency coordination was of such magnitude that it prompted the GAO to recommend the appointment of a senior White House official to oversee federal preparedness and response (Government Accountability Office, 1993, p. 2).

The Clinton Administration did not adopt the recommendations of NAPA or the GAO. Instead, it reorganized FEMA under a robust leadership cadre but did not change the way operational planning was conducted at the federal level. FEMA was still responsible for coordination but had no real authorities for this function. FEMA under the leadership of James L. Witt was able to regain its reputation by responding effectively to the Loma Prieta and North Ridge earthquakes and with the personal intervention of President Clinton, the Midwest floods (Miskel, 2006, p. 89). This period may have been FEMA's golden age, but no catastrophes would really challenge and strain the federal system during until 2005. In this environment, the federal government continued to rely on a system that had already two narrow escapes when the scale and magnitude of the disasters required a coordinated and synchronized government effort. Up to this point in history, no interagency structure in the federal government existed that was responsible for the development of coordinated domestic policies and strategies. The 9/11 terrorist attacks changed that. The attacks, whilst a psychological and strategic catastrophe, did not over task or challenge the ability of the federal government to provide support to local authorities in New York,

Virginia and Pennsylvania, which responded to their aftermath. However, the attacks resulted in the creation of a domestic system that replicated the interagency framework of the national security system.

B. THE 9/11 EFFECT

In October 2001, President Bush issued Executive Order 13228 creating the Homeland Security Council (HSC), which was followed by HSPD-1 to establish the structure and process of the homeland interagency system. The 2002 Homeland Security Act codified the HSC, created the Department of Homeland Security, and integrated FEMA as a sub-component of the Department (U.S. Congress, 2002). Consequently, in just over a year, the federal government managed to replicate a model born out of the experiences of a world war, had several decades of evolution during the Cold War, and was showing signs of strain after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The directives and legislation assigned coordination responsibilities respectively for federal homeland security activities to both the HSC and the DHS Secretary.¹⁷ In short order, both the HSC and the DHS developed a number policies, strategies and plans almost exclusively focused on terrorism and sought to provide a fix to the major intelligence and information sharing failures experienced during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Nowhere is this approach more evident than in the 2002 National Strategy for Homeland Security where the emergency preparedness and response paradigm was shifted to the assumption that preparing for a catastrophic terrorist attack would also result in adequate preparation for natural disasters (U.S. Executive Office of the President, 2002). While the focus remained on the terrorist threat, the Bush Administration did not take any significant measures to ensure that federal emergency planning for catastrophes was coordinated and synchronized to the degree that they were seeking in counter-terrorism activities. In a parallel resembling President Carter's Executive Order 12148, Bush's 2003 HSPD-5 and HSPD-8 vested the Secretary of DHS

¹⁷ Homeland Security Act to both, HSPD-1 to the HSC,

with the responsibilities to coordinate federal response and preparedness activities but did not weighed the department to lead what was becoming a complex multi-agency effort effectively. Vesting refers to the assignment of responsibility. Weighing refers to the conferral of power – in this case the power to direct other organizations during the pre- and post disaster time frames (Miskel, 2006, p. 68). Their uncanny similarity goes as far as to assume voluntary agency cooperation and compliance by including a mandate directing all departments to cooperate.¹⁸ The Federal Response Plan was updated and published as the National Response Plan (NRP) in 2004, but essentially, it preserved the system in place since the early 1990s; plans were developed in stovepipes with no structure that ensured vertical and horizontal integration (U.S. Executive Office of the President, 2006, p. 66). Therefore, the stage was set for a test that would strain and challenge the capabilities of the federal government on a scale never experienced before. Hurricane Katrina would become the Super Bowl of preparedness and response; it propelled the asymmetries of the 21st century into a collision course with traditional federalism and the canon that massive capabilities could compensate for multi-dimensional integration.

C. KATRINA

In the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the Gulf Coast, the nation was counting on this system to deliver a coordinated and synchronized federal response. The magnitude and scale of Hurricane Katrina, a bonafide national catastrophe, was the first real test since Hurricane Andrew that placed a significant strain and challenge on the federal preparedness and response system. The federal government threw in the proverbial kitchen sink into the response efforts but the outcome was predictable since there was no accountability for the development of federal agency

¹⁸ See Bush's HSPD-5 and HSPD-8, and Carter's EO12148.

operational plans, no visibility over available capabilities, and more importantly, a structure to synchronize available agency plans even if they existed. The Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned report explains it best:

At the most fundamental level, part of the explanation for why the response to Katrina did not go as planned is that key decision-makers at all levels simply were not familiar with the plans. The NRP was relatively new to many at the Federal, State, and local levels before the events of Hurricane Katrina. This lack of understanding of the “National” plan not surprisingly resulted in ineffective coordination of the Federal, State, and local response. Additionally, the NRP itself provides only the ‘base plan’ outlining the overall elements of a response: Federal departments and agencies were required to develop supporting operational plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to integrate their activities into the national response. In almost all cases, the integrating SOPs were either non-existent or still under development when Hurricane Katrina hit. Consequently, some of the specific procedures and processes of the NRP were not properly implemented, and Federal partners had to operate without any prescribed guidelines or chains of command. (U.S. Executive Office of the President, 2006, p. 53)

Hurricane Katrina proved beyond doubt that if the business as usual approach for preparedness, specifically, the development, coordination and synchronization of plans, was not adequate to respond to a large-scale natural disaster, it would be even less effective for a national catastrophe resulting from terrorist attacks. Congress responded by passing the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act in 2006. This statute addressed DHS and FEMA response issues, but more importantly, it established a legislative mandate for national preparedness. It directed the federal government to develop a National Preparedness System, National Preparedness Goals, National Planning Scenarios, and mandated the development of deliberate operational plans by federal agencies. The Bush Administration followed suit by publishing National Preparedness Guidelines (September 2007), a new National Strategy for Homeland Security (October 2007), Annex 1 to HSPD 8 (December 2007), a National Response Framework (January 2008) and the Integrated Planning System (January 2009). These seminal documents established a framework and

process for the development of federal plans in use today. As a result, it was the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe that propelled the first significant changes to a preparedness system decades old, had several close calls and failed, and finally, proved totally inadequate when seriously challenged. These changes, although not perfect, were a step forward, since for the first time in history, the federal government had a system in place to coordinate domestic interagency planning efforts. The system mimicked the national security system processes at the strategic level but left intact the operational autonomy of the federal departments.

D. NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM AND PLANNING

The national security system provides a formal structure at the strategic level that serves as a forum for strategic level coordination and synchronization. Since 9/11, the system evolved to include the homeland as part of its responsibilities for strategic direction. The Bush Administration copied the NSC model when it established its domestic twin, the Homeland Security Council. President Obama, in his first month in office, signed two directives that had direct consequences on the federal planning system. His PDD-1 maintained the traditional NSC model by preserving the Principals (PC), Deputies (DC) and Interagency Policy Committees (IPC) structure and interagency process (Obama, 2009). These senior level groups provide the direction that aligns the federal departments with the national objectives and ensure that they comply with the President's agenda. However, in Presidential Study Directive One (PSD-1), he signaled a shift by stating that homeland security is indistinguishable from national security—conceptually and functionally; they should be thought of together rather than separately (Obama, 2009). This led to the merger of the NSC and HSC staffs and a major effort to review the national preparedness system.

Even under the potential revisions of the Obama Administration HSPD-8, the system's structure of PCs, DCs and IPCs continues to provide oversight over the international and domestic policy and strategy efforts, and just as it has been

since Hurricane Katrina, their function includes oversight over operational planning in the homeland.¹⁹ It is important to note that the members of the Principals and Deputies Committees are the department heads and deputies, respectively.²⁰ Currently, there are approximately 11 IPCs for foreign regions, 27 for functional areas and seven focused on homeland security areas (Whittaker, Smith, & McKune, 2008, p. 15).²¹ All these IPCs, with their multiple functional areas, report to DCs and PCs, which is the forum in which policy issues are resolved or approved. To put this in perspective, the schedule of these DCs and PCs is driven by national strategic priorities based on: a) real world events (Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, etc.); b) presidential priorities (summits, trips, head of state visits, country or region specific issues, etc.); and c) programs (treaties, strategies, QDR, QHSR, plans, etc).²² Although the numerous IPCs can meet as often as necessary, the DC and PC schedule is limited by real world priorities where planning may not be on the top of the list. Making matters worse, the NSC/HSC staffs are relatively small and getting the issues ready for prime time before the principals or deputies takes time. The end result is a bottleneck at the White House that constitutes a bureaucratic impediment, that in the end, places the principals and deputies in the reactive mode looking at crises rather than focusing on policy, guidance and strategy (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 330, 389).

The Domestic Readiness Group (DRG) is the IPC convened on a regular basis to develop and coordinate preparedness, response, and incident management policy, and as such, it is also responsible for oversight over development of homeland security strategic guidance, strategies and concept plans within the structure of the Integrated Planning System, National Response Framework and National Preparedness Guidelines (NPG) (U.S. Department of

¹⁹ IPS states that coordination will be done by the HSPD-1 process, pp. 4–5.

²⁰ Designated representatives are permitted in their absence.

²¹ Obama Administration is reviewing the list but it is not available to the public.

²² Source: author. Analysis of the NSC/HSC schedule for the last two years. The number of meetings average about 2x-3x daily.

Homeland Security, 2008, p. 54). The DRG straddles between the strategic and operational domains. At the strategic level, the DRG is the forum in which homeland security strategic guidance statements (SGS) and strategies are reviewed, de-conflicted and approved before they go up to a DC and PC for approval. Conversely, at the operational level, the DRG does the same thing for federal concept plans (CONPLAN), and also may be convened during an incident by DHS to evaluate relevant interagency policy issues regarding response and develop recommendations as may be required (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008, p. 54).

While the collective federal government strategic and operational preparedness framework is fully coordinated and synchronized under the interagency process, individual agency operational plans remain on autopilot just like they have been since the Three Mile Island Disaster. As discussed in the literature review, there is an ongoing vigorous debate about whether strategic planning is effective, can be improved or has to be reinvented. While, that may be the case, the fact remains that the failures of Katrina, and for that matter Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew, were not strategic in nature. At the most basic level, it was the over reliance on federal departments' voluntary compliance with the established preparedness framework and a reluctance to establish a system able to track, coordinate and synchronize agency operational plans. This was the Katrina blind spot; no one in the federal government, including DHS and FEMA, could reasonably visualize how the multiple federal agencies were supposed to integrate their plans, capabilities and timing efforts magically into a fully coordinated and synchronized federal response. This horizontal coordination and synchronization blind spot remains today since the IPS does not prescribe a process and the interagency system has not been able to force the function under its current governance framework.

E. THE FEDERAL PLANNING PROCESS

The purpose of the Integrated Planning System (IPS) is to further enhance the preparedness of the United States by formally establishing a standard and comprehensive approach to national planning (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. iii). Annex I of HSPD-8 envisioned the IPS as a structure that would “translate policies, strategies and planning guidance” into a family of strategic, operational and tactical plans and established a timeline for their development. Figure 1 defines the type of plans and describes the relationship between the family of plans and the strategic, operational and tactical domains.

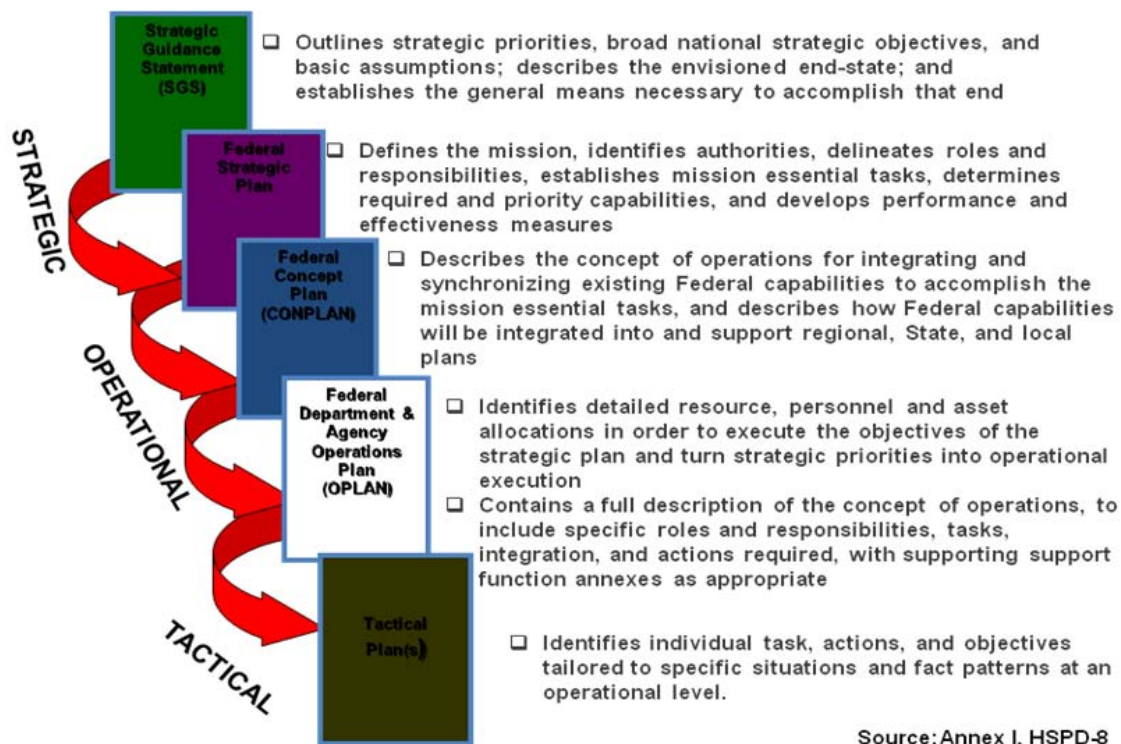


Figure 1. Federal Family of Plans

The National Planning Scenarios were the first major effort under IPS to focus the development of federal plans to respond to national level catastrophes.²³ They are required by legislation and presidential directive to

²³ Established as a key element of the National Preparedness Guidelines, NPG, p. iii.

establish a planning and preparedness baseline for worst-case catastrophes. According to the IPS, the Secretary of Homeland Security was tasked by the President to work in coordination with other agencies with a role in homeland security to develop a Strategic Guidance Statement (SGS), Strategic Plan, and a Concept Plan (CONPLAN) for each NPS (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. IV).

DHS, per HSPD-8, took the lead for the development of strategic level documents by forming the Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT).²⁴ This Interagency group housed in DHS at the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning is responsible for collaboratively developing Strategic Planning Guidance and Strategic Plans for each of the 15 scenarios and submitting them to the Domestic Readiness Group for review, concurrence, and if required, adjudication of issues. The IMPT has faced significant obstacles in gaining intra-agency and interagency cooperation in their efforts to produce these plans. Their efficiency was affected because some of the interagency members were not empowered to make decisions by parent agencies, and in some cases, personnel assigned were not as capable as the planning process required (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 49). Nevertheless, once the IMPT products are cleared by the DRG, the documents are reviewed using the NSC process described above and any remaining conflicts adjudicated at the DC or PC level as appropriate. Once that process is complete, the Secretary of DHS signs the document and distributes it to the federal departments and the homeland security community. HSPD-8 Annex 1 directs the development of a CONPLAN no later than 180 days after the Secretary of DHS issues a strategic plan for any of the National Planning Scenarios (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007).

The IMPT at DHS does not develop CONPLANS; they are the product of the FEMA Operational Planning Branch of the Disaster Operations Directorate. This is a result of the Post-Katrina Act, which essentially made FEMA the lead for

²⁴ The IMPT is also the proponent of the National Planners Course, which seeks to train federal and non-federal stakeholders in the development of plans.

coordinating the federal government operational planning (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 100). Unlike DHS, which uses an interagency work group to develop plans, FEMA uses their internal planners to develop the CONPLANS and holds stakeholder meetings to seek their input and comments.²⁵ Once these plans are developed, they go through the same process as the Strategic Guidance and Plans with the exception that the DRG provides the final NSC level review before the Secretary's signature.²⁶ Agencies with homeland security responsibilities have 120 days after its signature to develop their operational plans. According to the Interagency Sharing of Federal Department and Agency Integrated Planning System (IPS) Related Plans Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), agencies should forward their operational plans through the DRG for posting into the homeland security information network. This document also establishes the expectation that individual agencies review all posted agency IPS related plans to identify best practices, seams, gaps or overlaps for inclusion into a work group review process. While in theory this system for synchronization is available, just like its previous predecessors, it relies on voluntary compliance by all federal departments. Unfortunately, federal agencies historically do not have a great track record of compliance with policy and processes. The Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned report, Interagency Cooperation Case studies and various GAO reports attest to that.²⁷

As indicated previously, the Obama Administration has signaled that it intends to undertake a major review of the IPS and HSPD-8. Their aim is to establish a fully integrated National Planning System that incorporates an end-to-end process that links policy, strategy, plans, capabilities and budget as a system (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. 72). It is unclear if the initiative will result in the modification of the IPS family of plans and the National Planning

²⁵ A good number of them are contractors, FEMA Operations Branch Contact Roster.

²⁶ FEMA CONPLAN Leadership Status Brief, March 2009. Major IA disputes are resolved at the DC or PC level as appropriate.

²⁷ See PNSR.org for case studies that highlighted this problem.

Scenarios. However, what is clear is that federal agencies are required to develop their own operational plans, which creates a need for coordination and synchronization. It is on this basis that the performance of the system should be evaluated since every major disaster has consistently exposed a lack of harmonization of the federal response effort.

F. DELIVERING THE GOODS

Clearly, since Hurricane Katrina, the federal government established a domestic emergency planning architecture that, in a sense, is more complex than ever before in history; but the question is does the system performs as designed? It is a known fact that the United States has enormous capabilities to respond to reoccurring disasters and has been fairly successful in these cases. However, that does not guarantee that the system can work as designed for large scale or multiple catastrophes, since as history has shown, they tend to strain the ability of the system to perform. As already demonstrated, the federal governance structure places high emphasis on planning, coordination and synchronization. It is almost near impossible to find a document in the federal system that does not stress the importance of these three functions. Moreover, these functions are the center of gravity of a system focused around the catastrophic scenarios listed in the NRF. These scenarios represent examples of the gravest dangers facing the United States and have been accorded the highest priority for federal planning (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008, p. 73). In this sense, a catastrophe is defined as an incident or multiple incidents that embody the greatest risk of mass casualties, massive property loss, and immense social disruption whose cascading effects expose vulnerabilities that can be exploited and erode the citizens' confidence on the Nation's government (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007, p. 3).²⁸ In other words, these nightmare scenarios can bring the nation to its knees.

²⁸ Post Katrina Act defines catastrophe in similar terms in GAO-08-868T on page 2.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the architecture contains parameters for the development of strategic and operational documents that can be used to analyze the performance of the system.

These parameters can be analyzed in terms of outcomes, efficiency, alignment and effectiveness. The outcomes measure the number and the type of plans that the system produces against established requirements (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 85). Efficiency evaluates whether the system outcomes meet the established requirements in timelines and integration by establishing a management system that sets appropriate objectives and milestones, leverages production resources, and compensates for outside variables for the development of plans (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 33). Alignment uses a sampling of available plans to determine whether they are consistent with policy objectives and strategy. Lastly, effectiveness evaluates the system to assess whether it contains a synchronization process that drives vertical and horizontal integration (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. iii).

Key Scenario Sets	National Planning Scenarios
1. Explosives Attack – Bombing Using Improvised Explosive Device	• Scenario 12: Explosives Attack – Bombing Using Improvised Explosive Device
2. Nuclear Attack	• Scenario 1: Nuclear Detonation – Improvised Nuclear Device
3. Radiological Attack – Radiological Dispersal Device	• Scenario 11: Radiological Attack – Radiological Dispersal Device
4. Biological Attack – <i>With annexes for different pathogens</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 2: Biological Attack – Aerosol Anthrax • Scenario 4: Biological Attack – Plague • Scenario 13: Biological Attack – Food Contamination • Scenario 14: Biological Attack – Foreign Animal Disease
5. Chemical Attack – <i>With annexes for different agents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 5: Chemical Attack – Blister Agent • Scenario 6: Chemical Attack – Toxic Industrial Chemicals • Scenario 7: Chemical Attack – Nerve Agent • Scenario 8: Chemical Attack – Chlorine Tank Explosion
6. Natural Disaster – <i>With annexes for different disasters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 9: Natural Disaster – Major Earthquake • Scenario 10: Natural Disaster – Major Hurricane
7. Cyber Attack	• Scenario 15: Cyber Attack
8. Pandemic Influenza	• Scenario 3: Biological Disease Outbreak – Pandemic Influenza

Figure 2. Scenario Sets (From NRF p. 75)

Outcomes. The requirement to conduct scenario driven planning was established by legislation and presidential directives.²⁹ HSPD-8 Annex 1 established the requirement for the development of a family of plans using the IPS and was based on the 15 catastrophic scenarios in the NRF. These scenarios were grouped in eight categories as depicted in Figure 2 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008, p. 75).

The directive requires the federal government as an entity to produce one each strategic guidance statement, strategic plan and concept plan. The federal departments, in turn, are required to produce at least one operational plan for each of CONPLAN addressing a particular scenario category.

²⁹ Post Katrina Act and HSPD-8 Annex 1.

Federal Plan	SGS	SP	CONPLAN	OPLAN
Terrorist Use of Explosives (TUE)				
Improvised Nuclear Device (IND)				
Biological Attack (BIO)				
Radiological Attack – (RDD)				
Chemical Attack				
Natural Disasters				
Cyber Attack				
Pandemic Influenza (PI)				
Color	Definition			
Green	Approved by DHS Secretary			
Tan	Awaiting Approval (DHS or Dept Sec.)			
Yellow	Under Development (UD)			
Blank	Awaiting Development (AD)			

Table 1. IPS Plan Status (After IMPT Newsletter; data from GAO)

While the number of plans required from the government as an entity are fairly easy to determine (one each strategic guidance statement, strategic plan and concept plan per set), the same cannot be said about agency operational plans because the IPS lists 31 federal agencies, that depending on their role and mission in each scenario set, may be required to develop operational plans (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, pp. 3–3). Table 1 provides a status as of January 13, 2010 for each of the national planning scenario sets. The table indicates that, at the strategic level, some significant progress has been made in the development of strategic guidance and strategic plans. Conversely, progress at the operational level has been minimal since the federal government has only produced one CONPLAN with another plan on the pipeline under final review. However, more telling, is the last column, which addresses the status of individual agency operational plans (OPLAN) that indicate that none has been completed to date. This status has not changed at all since GAO conducted their

comprehensive review of preparedness plans in April 2009 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 100). This finding was repeated in October 2009 during their evaluation of DoD's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Explosive (CBRNE) plans when GAO found that the department was not able to integrate these plans with other federal agencies because their plans were not completed (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 3).

Before assessing whether the system is producing the required outcomes, it is significant to consider the effect on variables on plan production. These variables include agency planning capabilities and shifting national priorities. Although HSPD-8 directs all federal agencies with homeland security responsibility to develop planning capabilities, no system is in place from which to assess the level of progress in this area (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 48).³⁰ This data is essential for the development of a program management system that can adequately track and resource planning efforts. Therefore, without this data, the assumption is made at the federal level that the departments have complied with the requirement and are capable of producing plans in accordance with the established guidelines.

The other variables deal with shifting operational priorities like the H1N1 pandemic and southwest border violence planning, which had an effect on production as they sidetracked the IMPT from deliberate planning to crisis action planning. A change in priorities at the HSC led to the development of a family of plans for these events as established by the IPS.³¹ Lastly, on September 2009, the administration placed a moratorium on National Planning Scenario planning while it reviewed HSPD-8 and the IPS. In the same month, the DRG approved resuming review of the IND CONPLAN, which as of this writing, is still

³⁰ See also Heritage Foundation, National Disaster Planning Slowed by Inadequate Interagency Process, October 24, 2007.

³¹ Author's conversation with IMPT members.

undergoing review. Regardless, the analysis suggests that at the strategic level, the IMPT and the DRG have achieved some success developing the required plans as indicated by Table 1.

The system has completed 56% of the strategic level plans required by the IPS. At the operational level, only one 12% of the CONPLANS has been completed (1 out of 8). This is not factoring in the requirement for the development of agency operational plans, which as Table 1 indicates, has a 0% completion rate.³² Based on this assessment, the current system's performance at the strategic level shows progress under current conditions but is not optimal. As discussed previously, the literature is abundant with recommendations to improve or reinvent the strategic system, which is not the case at the operational level, since most of the literature takes a unitary view of the strategic and operational domains. As this assessment demonstrates, a substantial difference in outcomes exists between the strategic and operational level. Both Congress and the CRS have voiced concerns over the lack of operational plans as they recognize that these plans are essential for the government's execution of the NRF during a major catastrophic incident (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. CRS-9). This supports the conclusion that the system is not performing as designed at the operational level.

Efficiency. The Post Katrina Act and HSPD-8 established the requirement for the management of federal preparedness. At the strategic level, both the statute and the directive place that responsibility on the Secretary of DHS in coordination with the federal departments that have homeland security responsibility. HSPD-8 Annex 1 also tasked the Secretary of DHS to develop a National Homeland Security Plan (NHSP) intended to "facilitate federal homeland security coordination, establish priorities and define roles and responsibilities" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). This plan would have

³² GAO used FEMA and DHS operational plan requirements to determine how many operational plans were completed in their 09-369 report. Based on this, they assessed that 16 agency operational plans were not completed.

established the structure for the implementation of the Homeland Security Management System required by the 2007 National Strategy for Homeland Security. DHS published a pre-decisional draft of the plan on 2008, but all work on the document was stopped because of the administration's review of the federal planning system. Therefore, the cornerstone of the management system is not in place.

Conversely, at the operational level, the Post Katrina statute specifically tasks FEMA to develop a “comprehensive system to assess, on an ongoing basis, the nation’s prevention capabilities and overall preparedness, including operational readiness. The assessment system must assess (i) compliance with the national preparedness system, National Incident Management System, National Response Plan (now known as the National Response Framework), and other related plans and strategies...” (U.S. Congress, 2006).³³ The act’s mandate addressed a major finding from the Katrina Lessons Learned, where it was noted that that federal departments and agencies, were required to develop supporting operational plans and standard operating procedures for national response activities. However, in almost all cases, these required plans and procedures were either nonexistent or still under development (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 29)³⁴ In essence, statute required FEMA to develop a program management plan to shepherd the federal operational planning efforts.

According to GAO, a program management plan would have helped FEMA identify the specific schedule of activities that needed to be performed to complete and identify dependencies among policy and planning development activities; identify the types and quantities of resources required to perform, and amount of time needed to complete, all policy and planning development activities; analyze activity sequences, durations, resource requirements, and schedule constraints to create and update the policy and planning project

³³ See Section 749, also in GAO 09-369 p. 53.

³⁴ Also found in Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned report and CRS NRF report.

schedules; and control for changes to the project schedules precipitated by outside forces. This finding resonates throughout the literature where a reoccurring conclusion is that the national security system, both domestically and international, does not have efficient planning processes.³⁵ Thus, the absence of a management system at the strategic level and the failure of FEMA to use best practices for program management suggest that the system is not efficient. In terms of meeting the established requirements, the outcomes of the system have not been timely or fully integrated.³⁶

The IMPT interagency construct established by DHS has been able, with some success, to keep the production of strategic level plans a reasonable rate. However, their dual responsibility for contingency (deliberate) and crisis action planning is a double edge sword that affects their efficiency when national priorities or events required a focus on crisis action planning (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. A6–667). On the other hand, FEMA has not shown significant progress in its responsibility to drive federal operational planning efforts. While GAO ascribed this shortcoming to the absence of a program management system, it needs to be taken in the context that GAO has traditionally supported the “lead agency” concept, which historically has proven inadequate in many cases (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 17). Clearly, the absence of operational plans is not surprising nor headline breaking news. Since the Three Mile Island disaster, this finding has consistently been repeated in every major post-mortem of a federal disaster failure.

Alignment. It is important to note that whether these policies and strategies are right for the nation, it is not within the scope of this thesis. That point is the subject of a national debate and the numerous proposals to overhaul the national security system.³⁷ The alignment assessment is an examination of

³⁵ PNSR and CSIS Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Reports.

³⁶ GAO and CRS commented on the lack of integration with non-federal jurisdictions. Thomas Birkland and Sarah Waterman make a similar claim on their essay “Is Federalism the Reason for Policy Failure in Hurricane Katrina.”

³⁷ PNSR, BG-N, etc.

the number of plans available and whether they are aligned with policy and grand strategy.³⁸ As noted on Table 1, a very limited number of plans are available; more so at the strategic level than at the operational level. As previously discussed, the national security system provides a mechanism to ensure the alignment of plans with national policy and their coordination among the federal agencies. All indications are that the IMPT has used the IPS process to develop, coordinate and seek approval of strategic level plans. The DRG was chartered to review all strategic level plans to ensure compliance with the IPS and alignment with the Administration's policy objectives. The Deputies Committee, and if appropriate, the Principals Committee, provided a senior level review and granted approval for those strategic level plans listed in Table 1. GAO reviewed approved and in progress plans as part of their assessment on national preparedness and cross-walked them with the National Strategy for Homeland Security, HSPD-5, HSPD-8 and various other policy directives (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, pp. 76–78). Their findings did not indicate any discrepancies in the alignment and quality of these plans concerning established policies and processes (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009, pp. 9–13).³⁹

At the operational level, the system has produced a total of three CONPLANS that have gone through the IPS process from cradle to grave: the Terrorist Use of Explosives, the Period of Heightened Alert and the Federal Interagency Hurricane.⁴⁰ HSPD-8 Annex 1 directed the development of the Terrorist Use of Explosives CONPLAN. Conversely, the HSC directed the Period of Heightened Alert and Hurricane CONPLANS in response to national priorities. These documents received an interagency qualitative review per the IPS process and their format and structure are identical to the one prescribed in Appendix C

³⁸ Presidential Policy Directives establish policy. The National Strategy for Homeland Security and other strategies (National Maritime Security Strategy, National Infrastructure Protection Strategy, etc.) drive the grand strategy.

³⁹ A separate review by the author of all the published and draft plans confirmed this finding.

⁴⁰ TUE, April 2009, POHA, January 2009, and Hurricane, May 2009.

of the IPS.⁴¹ Clearly, the system works for federal level operational plans, which imposes an interagency qualitative review using the national security system before the Secretary of DHS signs and publishes the document (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, pp. 5-11/5-12). However, that is not the case for the required agency operational plans. As the GAO findings indicate, FEMA has not developed a program management system to track the development of agency operational plans required by law and policy. While this may be a useful tool, it is doubtful that FEMA can muster the power or authorities to compel compliance with this system by other federal agencies. The DRG attempted to compensate for this shortcoming by publishing an interagency SOP in which agencies agreed to submit their plans through the DRG for posting into the HSIN portal.⁴² To date, no record or evidence of any agency plan using this process exists; indicating that while this process exists on paper, it has not materialized into the desired system that can collaboratively assess alignment and compliance among the federal department's operational plans. Interestingly, DHS reported to Congress in January that it had mostly complied with the Post-Katrina Act and had implemented most of the Lessons Learned recommendations (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009). As already seen, GAO's April 2009 findings seem to contradict that assessment.

Effectiveness. The National Strategy for Homeland Security sought to establish “a deliberate and dynamic system that translates our policies, strategies, doctrine, and planning guidance into a family of strategic, operational, and tactical plans. These plans should be coordinated with relevant stakeholders, consistent with the fundamental roles and responsibilities of local, tribal, state, and federal governments bring to bear all appropriate instruments of national power and influence, assign activities to specific homeland security actors, and appropriately sequence these activities against a timeline for implementation” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007, p. 43). This strategic objective is

⁴¹ See IPS, p. C-1.

⁴² DRG IA Plan Sharing SOP.

based on legislation, which requires that plans be coordinated under a unified system and with the participation of non-federal jurisdictions (U.S. Congress, 2006).⁴³ HSPD-8 Annex-1 states that developing a synchronized and coordinated planning capability at all levels of the government is of paramount national importance (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). These requirements in law, policy, and strategy guided the development of the national planning governance structure in the post Katrina era. The National Planning Guidelines, the National Response Framework, and ultimately, the Integrated Planning System, refer to this conceptual framework that establishes the desirability for vertical and horizontal integration of plans between stakeholders. It is a “desire” instead of a requirement because the federal government lacks the constitutional authority to mandate integration among the many stakeholders that comprise the response community.

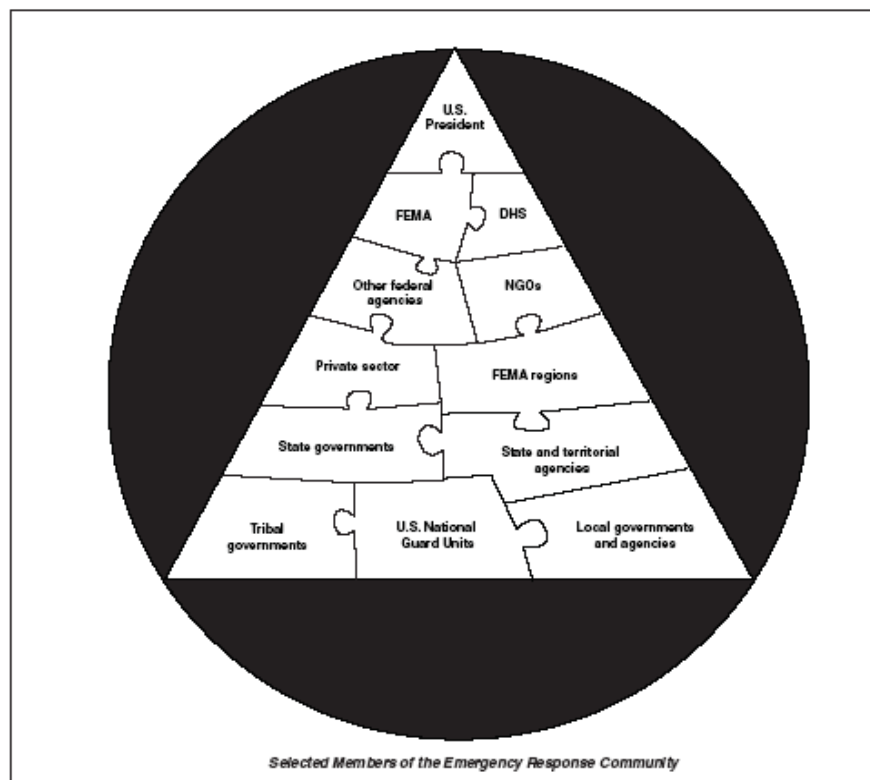


Figure 3. GAO Stakeholder Analysis

⁴³ See Section 653.

It is on this premise that the IPS bases the effectiveness of the planning system. In its own words, “the IPS has been developed recognizing that homeland security planning is based on coordination and synchronization rather than command and control. In the Executive Branch, only the President of the United States has directive authority over federal departments and agencies. Effective planning in this situation can only occur through federal departments and agencies actively coordinating and synchronizing their planning with each, as required by the situation.” Hence, this statement establishes the grounds for evaluating the planning system.

As established in the previous sections, the HSPD-1 and the IPS established a formal process to coordinate federal level plans horizontally. As previously stated, this process works for the Strategic Guidance Statements, Strategic Plans and the federal CONPLANS that have been approved. These plans, as shown in Figure 1, establish how the federal government responds to an incident. The CONPLAN provides the concept for coordinating and synchronizing federal capabilities as an entity but does not specifically address the availability, deployment and employment of capabilities. For example, in the Federal Interagency Hurricane Concept Plan, the Department of Defense (DoD) is responsible for four tasks: provide support to DHS, provide Defense Coordination Officers, conduct immediate support under Mutual Aid Agreements and provide Corp of Engineers support (Federal Interagency Hurricane CONPLAN, p. 19). Obviously, these tasks are not capabilities but the CONPLAN provides the context of what is expected from the DoD, which provides the basis for the development of the required agency OPLAN. The DoD has already identified over 60 capabilities it can provide or make available for response operations in the homeland, but this level of detail and capabilities can only be found in the supporting OPLAN.⁴⁴ Similarly, other agencies are given responsibilities and the expectation is that they identify the capabilities they are

⁴⁴ Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and American Security Affairs Memorandum Subject: Determination of Department of Defense Civil Support Requirements, July 13, 2009.

to provide to support the federal concept of operations in their agency OPLAN. Since no structure or process exists to coordinate and synchronize what can be up to 31 OPLANs for a national catastrophe, no way exists that DHS, as the lead coordinator, can determine who is bringing what, when is it coming and how it is going to be used.

At the operational level, the effectiveness of plans is predicated on the synchronization of timing, space and purpose (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009, pp. 1–7). The IPS makes three assumptions in this regard: a) agencies have developed the planning capabilities implied in HSPD-8, b) agencies develop operational plans as specified in the system, and c) agencies coordinate and synchronize these plans with all the stakeholders. Regardless of all the good will and professionalism that has to be assumed, the fact remains that voluntary compliance without appropriate oversight and measurement processes has not worked historically in the federal system. Rather than repeating the findings from every catastrophe since Three Mile Island to illustrate this point, a more recent example is available in the legislative and policy mandate for federal agencies to adopt and implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS).⁴⁵ The January 09 Federal Preparedness report indicated that only 30% of all agencies reported 100% compliance with the NIMS even though the system is a pillar of the federal response system and a national priority (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009, p. 20). To put this in perspective, the report highlights that over 96% of the states have achieved NIMS implementation. In the case of the states, the requirement is tied to the system of grant funding, but at the federal level, the system completely relies on voluntary compliance. The Federal Response Plan and the National Response Plan were built on the same three assumptions as the IPS, and as seen previously, when a large-scale catastrophe struck, these systems failed.

⁴⁵ Directed by Post Katrina Act Sect 653 and HSPD-5.

The assumption that federal agencies will appropriately coordinate and synchronize their plans with all the stakeholders, specifically with non-federal jurisdictions and the private sector, is worth further analysis since it is one of the tenants of current legislation and policy.⁴⁶ At the strategic level, the involvement of non-federal jurisdictions and the private sector in the planning process has been inconsistent because the governance framework did not establish a formal system for their inclusion in the policy and planning development process. Despite seven years of effort since 9/11, no mechanism currently exists to integrate mutually reinforcing comprehensive plans at the local, state and federal levels into a credible national response plan (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 42). The Center for Strategic Studies confirms this finding and argues that a healthy consultative planning process is also essential in creating the relationships and building the trust and credibility between federal, state, and local officials that are necessary if the nation is to respond effectively to a catastrophe (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 52).⁴⁷

The Private Sector and NGOs are not fairing much better than non-federal jurisdictions. This is, in fact, the unexplored frontier since the potential capabilities that they can contribute in response to a catastrophe are enormous as well. The private sector owns most of the nation's critical infrastructure and can be most effective in restoring its functions after an incident, which strongly suggests that they should be fully integrated into the system (Defense Science Board, 2009, p. 38). Equally important, the NGOs bring substantial surge capabilities that should require integration into the planning process. Just like their private sector counterparts, they are not consistently integrated into the government efforts (Homeland Security Institute, 2006, p. 23). The IMPT and FEMA have involved the American Red Cross during the development of some

⁴⁶ Non-federal jurisdiction refers to state, local and tribal governments; Private Sector includes businesses and their organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizen organizations.

⁴⁷ Author's emphasis on effective.

federal level plans since it has a NRF support function.⁴⁸ However, this arrangement does not incorporate the rest of the NGO community, which has substantial capabilities as well (Homeland Security Institute, 2006, p. 23). In all fairness, besides the absence of a formal structure to integrate NGOs into the planning system, a lack of funding also precludes them from dedicating planning staffs to support the federal planning efforts (Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 63).

DHS established a Homeland Security Advisory Council and a Private Sector Office to ensure the equities of non-federal stakeholders are heard in the department (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010). However, their effectiveness is questionable as the findings from the CSIS study indicate that officials from state and local governments have complained consistently and repeatedly that they are disconnected from the policy development process in Washington (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 52). Similar feedback has been reported by the private sector and NGOs (Defense Science Board, 2009, p. 38). Many indicate that although consultative and advisory boards are in place, consultations typically involve only a select few—the “usual suspects”—who are perceived, fairly or unfairly, as having been co-opted by federal officials (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 52). This data suggest that a dichotomy exists in the federal planning system. On one hand, a formal planning system that integrates federal stakeholders at the strategic level exists but it relies on informal structures to integrate non-federal stakeholders. On the other hand, operational planning uses the same framework for the development of CONPLANS, but for agency operational plans, the system relies on ad hoc processes and voluntary compliance to integrate federal and non-federal stakeholders. This leads to the conclusion that the system is partially effective for federal level plans since it contains the structure and processes to integrate at least federal stakeholders. However, it is not the case for agency level operational plans because the system has not changed for decades. Namely ,

⁴⁸ NRF lists the Red Cross as supporting ESF-6 Mass Care.

the system is built on the assumption that agencies can, on their own recognizance, develop the required capabilities, synchronize their efforts and comply with established processes. Obviously, the system's formal integration of non-federal stakeholders is lacking at all levels. This gap is driving the Obama Administration to develop a multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector National Planning System (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. 72).

G. ANALYSIS

This chapter provided a history of federal domestic interagency planning system and described its structure. The history shows a consistent pattern on the government's approach for emergency preparedness that exists even today. The federal government operates on the premise that governance frameworks can translate to coordinated and synchronized action. That was the case with the first Federal Response Plan, which failed during Hurricane Andrew, the National Response Plan, which failed during Hurricane Katrina and could be the case for the yet to be tested National Response Framework. The ability to respond to a disaster effectively is not in question since historically, although in some cases not pretty, the overwhelming capabilities of the federal government can work through a lack of coordination and synchronization problems. The issue is not if, but when the United States experiences the next catastrophe Super Bowl, will the system be able to perform or will it fail again. A strong consensus exists among the community of national security experts that indicate pessimism about the prospects of the system to handle large scale and/or multiple catastrophes:

the country is still not ready for a domestic catastrophe because the major relationships and processes needed to coordinate a response to a catastrophic event are not yet clear or mature and because attempts to date to implement a homeland security system that will organize these relationships and processes have struggled mightily. (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 3)

Strengths. The analysis suggests that significant strengths exists in the system. At the strategic level, the formal interagency structure to develop, review and approve policies, guidance and plans give a forum to all federal agencies to

voice their concerns regardless of their size or importance. It also provides a venue for interagency plans to be elevated to the highest level of the government and receive appropriate visibility. Although not perfect, the system also transfers knowledge among the departments. The evidence was found on the planning system framework, which was adapted from the Department of Defense extensive planning doctrine and experience. The IPS copied the format of the five-paragraph field order as the core structure for the development of plans. The system is also adaptable to shifting priorities as demonstrated by its ability to produce the H1N1, Hurricane and POHA family of plans. Even while operating under the Founding Father's harmoniously dysfunctional design, the federal departments have been able to develop and field collectively an impressive array of capabilities well matched for reoccurring disasters.⁴⁹ Lastly, there is the double edge sword of departmental autonomy, which by itself is a strength, but leads to the collective system weakness. It is a strength because it serves to focus the agency planning efforts and resources towards the mission areas and priorities established by the department leadership. Conversely, it is also the cause, as seen previously, of the inability of the government as a whole to establish structures and processes to make the planning system more effective.

Weaknesses. The system over-relies on governance and ad hoc arrangements without the formal processes or structures to ensure compliance and to measure progress towards established objectives reasonably. The responsibility for coordinating federal planning is divided between DHS at the strategic level and FEMA at the operational level. This structural divide creates a physical barrier between the operational and strategic planning process that adds another level of coordination since both organizations have to find ways to integrate their efforts. As seen previously, both DHS and FEMA are the leads for their respective planning levels, but this lead responsibility did not come with authorities. In the case of the DHS, IMPT it is not as critical since it is responsible

⁴⁹ i.e., RFID, Sensor Networks, Biometrics, Radiation Detection, Chemical Detection, Bio Detection, UAVs, CCTV, Satellite Imagery and GIS.

for developing a collective federal product. FEMA, on the other hand, is responsible for coordinating the development of agency operational plans, which as GAO findings indicated, progress has been dismal. Never mind that the “Lead Agency” approach has not been historically successful; both agencies, when faced with lack of cooperation or interagency conflicts, have no other recourse than to use the national security system for resolution (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 17). However, this by itself is a daunting task that places deliberate planning in competition against short-term policy issues that require immediate attention in a system already stretched thin by national and international challenges (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 274). Although the system can respond and has responded to shifting national priorities, the consequences are that deliberate planning takes the back seat to any front burner issue since the planners at both the DHS IMPT and the FEMA Operations Planning Branch are responsible for supporting crisis action planning.

In the national arena, the system lacks a structure for effective coordination and synchronization. This inconsistency affects its ability to harness and effectively bring to bear the collective capabilities of the nation. Christine Wormuth, now a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Obama Administration, explains it as follows,

managing the response to a major catastrophe successfully will involve every part of American society—the federal government, state and local governments, the private sector, the nongovernmental sector, and individuals themselves. No single government agency, private company, or charitable organization can possibly provide all that will be required in the face of a major disaster. The key to a successful response to major disasters in the future will be finding ways to leverage the particular capabilities of many parts of society while these diverse disciplines and tools are brought together for maximum effect. (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 1)

In summary, the national planning system provides a structure for the interagency coordination and vetting of national strategies, strategic plans and policies. In the last few years, the system has vetted a significant number of

homeland security strategies and policies that sought to integrate and synchronize the efforts of the government. While there may be some debate about the overall quality or effectiveness of these initiatives, the fact that the system was able to process a fair number of them within a reasonable amount of time indicates, that at this level, the system does work as designed. This does not mean that the system is perfect and there is no need for reform. On the contrary, the challenges and complexities of the modern environment probably make a compelling case for Congress to reform the system (Project for National Security Reform, 2008). However, until this reform is enacted, there is a compelling case as well to improve the operational planning system since the system is not performing and the nation cannot afford another strategic failure caused by its deficiencies. As Americans, it is tempting to think that the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina led to major restructuring and countless proposals for government reform only in the United States. Even more surprising is to discover that other nations implemented major government reform based on the lessons learned from these catastrophic events. Chapter IV examines three countries that took reform steps directly affecting their national planning and preparedness systems.

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IV. INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO EMERGENCY PLANNING

Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential.

Winston Churchill

Plans are nothing; planning is everything.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

A. INTRODUCTION

Planning is recognized globally as an essential element of any enterprise in modern times. Public and private entities have developed planning systems, structures and processes that seek to anticipate and prepare for every possible contingency that may have an effect on their endeavors. Historically, catastrophes serve as the catalyst that cause increased scrutiny on planning systems. As previously discussed, in the United States, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina were benchmark events that resulted in major revisions of the federal government planning processes. Although these events were “local” to the United States, they significantly impacted the international community and influenced substantially national approaches to planning.

This chapter is a comparative analysis of the approaches to planning by three English-speaking countries: Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand. This analysis focuses on how these countries approach the coordination, integration and synchronization of operational plans at the federal or national level. In recent years, none of the countries selected experienced a major national catastrophe or terrorist attack that may have triggered a major government reorganization. However, as with many nations around the world, they empathized with the United States when it was struck twice by catastrophes in the new century, and not long after, reorganized their systems. This empathy was not solely caused by traditional alliances, but more likely from the realization that if the world’s only superpower could be brought to the edge of the abyss, so could they. The

analysis recognizes that the governmental structures of these countries are significantly different from those of the U.S. government. Nevertheless, some of their approaches provide some insights that could be applied in the United States. Moreover, the analysis uses historical precedents in the United States that correlates these insights to the U.S. system and suggests that their adaptation is possible.

B. GLOBAL CONTEXT

On the outset of the World War II, President Roosevelt issued EO 8757 transferring civil defense and emergency management responsibility from the War Department to the Office of Emergency Management in the Executive Office of the President (Roosevelt, 1941). Before that time, the military was the sole agency in charge of providing disaster relief in the United States. Many third world countries today use the military in the same way; primarily, because their civilian agencies have little or no capabilities to provide these services (Miskel, 2006, p. 109). On the other hand, among the developed countries, emergency planning systems are as diverse as their forms of government. However, that does not mean that these systems have evolved in a vacuum. A popular saying states that a smart person learns from his or her own mistakes, but a genius learns from other people's mistakes. The United States has been in a fishbowl since 2001 in the domestic and international arenas. Katrina, Iraq, 9/11, and Afghanistan are the case studies that have shown the good, the bad and the ugly of the U.S. system. While no evidence exists to indicate that countries are rushing to copy the U.S.'s interagency and emergency planning systems, there is a concerted effort from many nations to learn from the U.S.'s experiences.⁵⁰ This fishbowl experiment produced a new worldview on the disastrous consequences of failing to integrate and synchronize all the elements of national power. Thus, just like the United States, they place a premium on deliberate planning, but

⁵⁰ i.e., U.K., N.Z. AUS published Katrina lessons learned that could be applied to their systems. N.Z. sent a team of experts to the United States to conduct a Katrina study.

more importantly, have modified their systems to meet their situation and needs. Some modifications are subtle, some are major, but as seen later, their changes are not totally foreign.

C. PLANNING APPROACHES

1. Ireland: The Planning Uber-Department

The Ireland National Government makes a clear distinction between planning and operations. The Minister of Defense (MOD) is responsible for providing policy and direction for the national emergency preparedness planning efforts while the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for oversight and implementation of the national response framework. Both ministers chair minister level groups that serve as coordinating mechanisms for planning and response respectively. The MOD chairs the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning that provides active leadership of the emergency planning process; facilitates contact and co-ordination between government departments and other public authorities; and oversees all emergency planning (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Ireland's Emergency Planning Structure (From Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance)

The Inter-Departmental Working Group on Emergency Planning, chaired by the Office of Emergency Planning, Department of Defence, provides support for the policy initiatives of the Minister for Defence as chair of the Government Task Force. The National Security Committee is concerned with ensuring that the Government is advised on high-level security matters. The committee is chaired by the Secretary General to the Government and comprises senior representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach; Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; An Garda Síochána; Department of Defence; Defence Forces; and Department of Foreign Affairs (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform).

The Minister of Defence with this authority provides the policy that guides the whole of government effort in developing plans for national emergencies. For instance, this structure allowed him to develop the 2004 the Strategic Emergency Planning Guide to guide the departments in the management of the planning processes. This organizational structure for planning is heavily dependent on legislation that codifies the authorities of one department over others. In this sense, the research indicates that by keeping the authorities of the Minister of Defence separate from the operational framework, the structure provides the government the advantage of using military planning systems to develop national plans. The Irish military, like in many western countries, has a fairly modern planning capability that can easily absorb the functional planning areas of other departments. Furthermore, by separating the operational framework from planning, the Irish Government effectively dealt with the issue of militarizing emergency response.

2. Canada: Collaboration with Muscle

The Canadian approach to planning is fundamentally based on strong legislation that gives the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) a prominent leadership role in directing the preparedness and planning framework for the country. The Emergency Management Act of 2007 gives the following authorities to the Minister of Public Safety.

- Establishing policies, programs and other measures respecting the preparation, maintenance, testing and implementation by a government institution of emergency management plans
- Providing advice to government institutions respecting the preparation, maintenance, testing and implementation of emergency management plans
- Analyzing and evaluating emergency management plans prepared by government institutions... (Parliament of Canada, 2007).

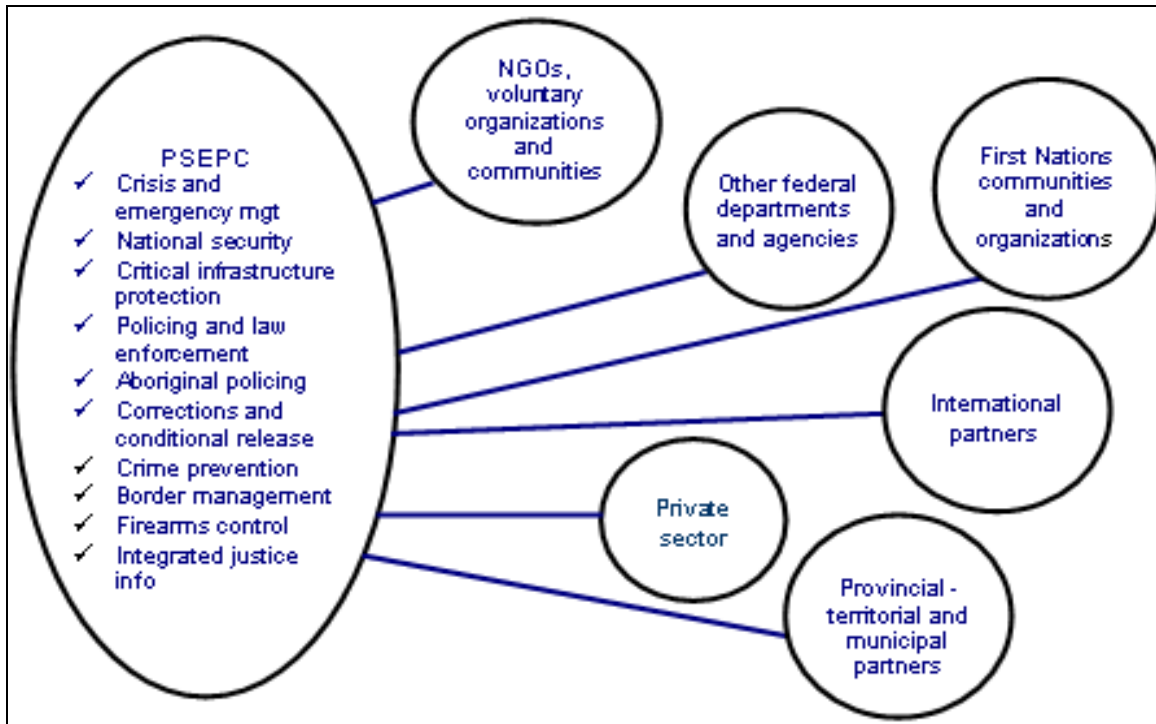


Figure 5. PSEPC Responsibilities and Relationships (From PSEPC RPP 2004–2005)

Armed with these authorities, the PSEPC has the capability to establish federal guidelines and regulations to synchronize and coordinate the planning efforts of other federal departments, provinces, and the private sector (Figure 5). In essence, the legislation gives the PSEPC the tools to establish a compliance regime for a whole of government approach to planning. However, unlike Ireland, where planning and response are separate functions, in Canada, PSEPC has the responsibility for both planning and response.

The problem is that Canada faces challenges similar to the Department of Homeland Security in the United States; whereas the responsibility for response does not have sufficient authorities to “herd the cats” and establish a compliance regime from other departments. Since the legislation was passed, PSEPC progress on both areas have been checkered according to the 2008 *Emergency Preparedness in Canada* report from the Canadian Standing Senate Committee

on National Security and Defence. Their findings indicate that PSEPC has not used its authority to drive interagency planning in Canada (Parliament of Canada, 2008).

In response to these findings, PSEPC has undertaken a major effort to establish the mechanisms to coordinate and synchronize federal plans. At the federal level, an initiative is underway to establish a Federal Emergency Planners Group at the director level and above to set policy and oversee the development of plans. Additionally, the government is contemplating forming a governance body at the ministerial level to provide the political direction for the emergency preparedness efforts.⁵¹

3. New Zealand: A Cluster Structure

The New Zealand approach to emergency planning relies on a collaborative structure codified by legislation with specific mandates on its design and responsibilities. The core of this structure is the regional Civil Defence and Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups), which are given the responsibility for both preparedness and response.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (the CDEM Act) came into force on 1 December 2002, providing the legislative basis for establishing CDEM Groups. A key responsibility of a CDEM Group is the development and implementation of a comprehensive, publicly consulted CDEM Group Plan. CDEM Group Plans form an important part of the CDEM framework in New Zealand as they state and provide for the hazards and risks to be managed by the CDEM Group, as well as specify the CDEM arrangements necessary to meet those hazards and risks and state the roles and responsibilities of those involved. (Civil Defense and Emergency Management)

New Zealand organizes the preparedness structure around what it calls clusters of multiple organizations that have emergency management responsibilities. These clusters are essentially multi-agency groups that have a

⁵¹ Author's non-attribution conversation with senior official in the PSEPC. Terms of reference for both initiatives are under staffing but not available to the public.

flexible structure to integrate multiple sectors and jurisdictions. At the National level, these clusters increase preparedness posture by 1) clarifying goals, responsibilities and roles for civil defence emergencies; 2) identifying gaps in capability and capacity; and 3) addressing the gaps in capability and capacity through emergency management action plans (Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Management, 2006).

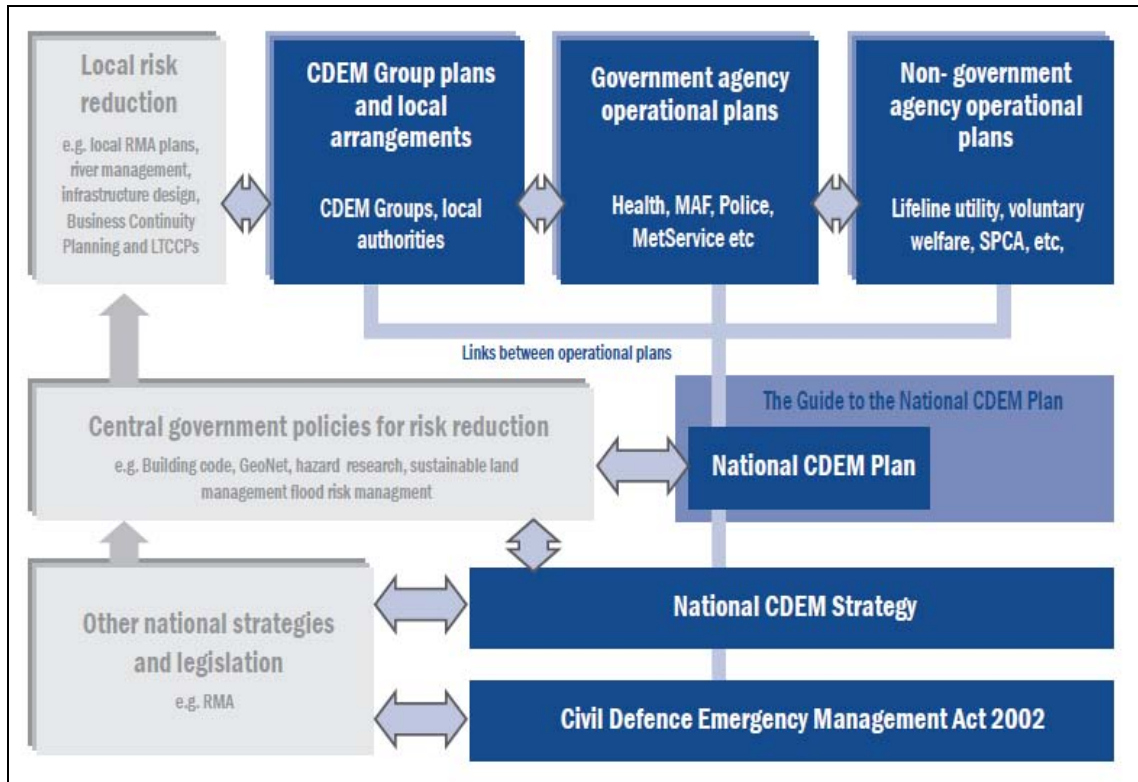


Figure 6. CDEM Planning Relationships (From CDEM Group Plan Review)

The CDEM Act requires the ministries to develop agency emergency plans and require their integration with the CDEM groups both at the national and regional level (Figure 6). This system is further synchronized by the broad authorities given to the Director of Civil Defense and Emergency Management to set policy and guidelines for the clustering of agencies in the planning process. Thus, these clusters are expected to operate in a coordinated multi-agency environment that is flexible permitting national agencies involved to join, exit or

merge with other clusters as circumstances dictate, allowing for overlap of functions and membership where circumstances dictate (Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Management, 2006). In summary, New Zealand's approach to emergency planning is a codified structure that directs multi-agency planning by forming specific groups at the national, regional and local level with the necessary authorities to coordinate and synchronize emergency planning.

D. ANALYSIS

These approaches to emergency planning and preparedness at face value tend to be as divergent as the political systems for which they were developed. This fact brings the first obvious lesson of the analysis; planning and emergency preparedness systems have to conform to the political structures and realities of the country. In the case of Ireland, the novel idea of separating the planning and response functions allowed them to take advantage of a natural planning capability that traditionally resides with the military establishments. Furthermore, although the Minister of Defence is responsible for emergency planning, he has to integrate other ministries in their development because the system calls for the employment of a senior level task force to institutionalize coordination and synchronization of plans. In contrast, in the United States, the federal departments develop their plans independently even though a good number of them lack the capacity to perform effective operational planning for large-scale catastrophic incidents (Mayer & Carafano, 2007). The federal government does not have a dedicated senior level group where its members have the expertise and authority to institutionalize the synchronization and coordination of plans.⁵²

In the case of Canada, who as a neighbor has adopted many of the U.S. homeland security processes, it has been seen that their Parliament weighed significant authorities on the Minister of Public Safety to synchronize and coordinate emergency planning. Yet, because the functions of preparedness and response fall under a single portfolio, it may detract from their ability to lead

⁵² DRG is the closest thing but members lack authority to force these functions.)

effectively and improve the national planning efforts. Just like in the United States, the government of Canada has expended vast amounts of resources in increasing the response capabilities since they carry the higher political risk. As stated before, planning only comes under scrutiny when a catastrophe happens and the government response does not meet expectations. While the parliamentary system may allow a department to have functional authority over another department, the United States' federal traditions do not allow Congress to pass legislation granting those authorities. Notwithstanding the conflicts that it would create among the federal departments, the committee system in Congress, which provides oversight over the federal departments, would most likely resist changes that affect their functions and appropriation realms.

New Zealand's approach to legislate collaborative structures for response and preparedness seems to be an advanced concept that merits further exploration. Granted, their political system allows them to legislate and regulate to the local level, but their inclusion of private sector and non-governmental organizations as equal partners in these clusters and CDEM Groups seems to be a better way to harness national power. New Zealand's approach not only optimizes emergency planning but it also makes better use of existing capabilities by placing responsibilities on the appropriate level for the development of plans and the conduct of response operations. In the United States, the U.S. system tends to have an ad hoc relationship with the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, the federal government has a history of not treating the states and local governments as equal partners (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 52).⁵³ New Zealand's legislation levels the field by ensuring that these entities are equal partners with the national government. This approach is radically different from that of the United States since the Executive Branch has traditionally prescribed the structures for coordination with other partners in the areas of preparedness and response. That

⁵³ See also PNSR State and Local Issue Analysis, GAO 08-868T and Birkland and Waterman.

is precisely the problem, since the federal government tends to establish processes that impact the states and locals without proper consultation and participation from affected parties.

E. PRINCIPLES AND PRECEDENTS

The case studies of Ireland, Canada and New Zealand provide diverse approaches for organizing national emergency planning systems. While their systems may not be adaptable to the United States, some core principles may have applications that can significantly improve the federal planning system. The Irish model of an “Uber-Department” for planning and the Canadian model of a department in charge of both operations and planning are not adaptable to the United States’ federal system because as stated before, it gives a department head executive authority over other departments. This supervisory and oversight authority is typically reserved for the President by the Constitution and federal law. On the other hand, the Irish core principle of separating the planning and operations functions is an approach that has potential for application for federal operational planning. By separating these functions, the federal government could establish a structure above the federal departments focused on synchronization and coordination of plans without competing with the departments’ traditional authorities for operations and resourcing. Historical precedents in the United States support this principle.

During the 1950s, when the Cold War was exploding and the National Security System was not mature, President Eisenhower restructured the NSC along these lines. In a similar way in the post 9/11 strategic environment, the Cold War’s pressing challenges were consuming the National Security Council at the expense of their ability to shape the environment by developing long-range policies and strategies. President Eisenhower divided the functional structure of the NSC to address this problem and provide strategic maneuvering room. Eisenhower, whose military background led him to place a premium on planning, as well as on operational coordination, established a Planning Board to provide

oversight over the development of policies and strategy and an Operations Coordinating Board to oversee the implementation of policy. These boards were senior level groups of assistant secretaries or higher from agencies statutorily represented in the NSC, which were empowered to perform these functions (Congressional Research Service, 2009, p. 8). Although some scholars have criticized this structure as overly complex and rigid, most agree that this system was able to establish accepted national security policies , which were implemented throughout the government and laid the basis for sustained competition with the Soviet Union for several decades (Congressional Research Service, 2009, p. 9).

This functional division is not an obsolete organizational concept. On the contrary, it is alive and well in the public and private sectors. For instance, in the Armed Forces Joint Staff, the functions are divided even more sophisticatedly between strategic planning (J5), operational planning (J7) and operations (J3) (The Joint Staff). Another less obvious example resides on the Department of Defense itself, whereas the Joint Staff is responsible for military strategies and plans while the Office of the Secretary of Defense has the responsibility for setting policy for the Department. However, one example more relevant to the interagency system is found on the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), which was originally established by Executive Order and later on codified by legislation (Bush, National Counterterrorism Center, 2004). Among the missions given by law to the NCTC are the responsibility for conducting strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, law enforcement activities within and among agencies, and to assign roles and responsibilities as part of its strategic operational planning duties to lead departments or agencies, as appropriate, for counterterrorism activities consistent with applicable law and that support counterterrorism strategic operational plans, but shall not direct the execution of any resulting operations

(U.S. Congress, 2004).⁵⁴ The NCTC example demonstrates that the U.S. federal system can indeed codify by directive or legislation an interagency organization that has as its purpose the synchronization and coordination of federal emergency planning while leaving operations as the domain of the federal departments.

The Canadian legislative approach of using specific functional authorities could be emulated to create and support this structure. Congress would have to enact legislation providing the structure specific authorities that keep the focus on planning without infringing on the operational and resourcing authorities of the federal departments. Again, the legislation authorizing the NCTC exhibits some of these traits by providing these guidelines, which makes this approach feasible for operational planning as well. The recent case of the Christmas Bomber has brought into question whether the NCTC has the teeth to force the coordination and synchronization among the Intelligence agencies. Be what it may, clearly, NCTC is prohibited from directing federal departments, but a precedent within the federal government exists where an agency can force department compliance without the involvement of the President. That agency is the EPA, and the methodology it uses is based on legislation that gives them responsibility for the enforcement of compliance by establishing federal regulations for the nation, as well as for the federal government. The EPA has the power to fine other federal departments, as well as the power to refer them to the Department of Justice for prosecution when appropriate (Department of Justice, 2000). As previously discussed, the Post Katrina Act and several other statutes require the departments to develop operational plans and a number of capabilities to respond to national catastrophes. It was also demonstrated that compliance was an issue even for national directed priorities like the NIMS. While this may seem a wacky example, the purpose is not to argue that Congress give an interagency organization the power to fine or refer for prosecution federal departments as an enforcement tool. The argument is for the empowerment of this organization for

⁵⁴ Section 1021.

the development of federal regulations that drive, to some degree, the federal planning and preparedness process. This is essential, especially, if the federal government seeks to integrate non-federal jurisdictions as equal partners like New Zealand does.

The Kiwi approach, of forming clusters with authorities for planning and operations, runs into a different but not less formidable challenge for implementation at the national level than the Irish and Canadian approaches. The cluster can be similar to the construct of the Combatant Commands used by DoD and legislated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This approach may require a wholesale organization of the federal government because it basically changes the role of the departments to resource providers (force providers) and creates an organization that has both planning and operational authorities. The model's scalability for regional, state and local jurisdictions is a natural advantage but also can be a source of opposition because it requires acceptance and implementation by all States.⁵⁵ While maybe seen as an evolution in the future of this kind, it is doubtful that the United States is ready for that type of reform, and even less likely, that Congress is to go along with it because it requires its reorganization as well. On the other hand, the Kiwi core principle of integrating the private sector and non-governmental organizations into the cluster is a construct that should be included in any future design structure for federal operational planning. Again, this requires specific authorities granted by legislation that allows and supports their participation as partners in a federal structure. Other than government appointed commissions, there does not seem to be any evidence of a cluster type structure in the United States that has been codified by directive or legislation to coordinate and synchronize multi-sector entities. Surprisingly, the U.S. military has a doctrine in place on how to establish and use an organization similar to the Kiwi Cluster, although it is designed for Peace Keeping Operations.

⁵⁵ Even under IPS and ICS, most states have their own way of doing things and fiercely defend their prerogatives on how to organize their government.

The doctrine has been in place since 1994 when the U.S. military became more involved in global peacekeeping operations under the Clinton Administration (The Joint Staff, 1994). It was recently revised and incorporated under JP-1 (Joint Publication), the Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States and in JP 3-08, Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations. The term that the U.S. military uses for the cluster is a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC). The function of this center, in similar fashion as a Kiwi Cluster, revolves around coordinating and synchronizing planning and operations among multi-sector organizations. More close to the homeland, the state of Florida is using a “Megacommunity” framework to plan, coordinate and synchronize its emergency preparedness efforts. The state of Florida

began creating a new approach that involved a variety of organizations—public, private, and civil—in their emergency planning and activities. It had become clear that no government agency could manage this type of large-scale catastrophe on its own. Each local, state, and federal agency tasked with emergency management had only part of the resources or knowledge needed to address a wide-ranging disaster that might strike at businesses, transportation nodes, utility infrastructures, water and food supplies, law enforcement, hospitals and medical services, communications networks, and other crucial services. So Florida expanded its planning process to include essential stakeholders at all levels of government, as well as private-sector, charitable, and faith-based organizations. (Himberger, Sulek, & Krill Jr., 2007)

Both the military and Florida examples have a major weakness when contrasted against the Kiwi Cluster approach. That weakness resides in the fact that these are ad hoc arrangements instead of a codified structure. Therefore, their use and effectiveness, as in any ad hoc organization, is subject to multiple variables ranging from funding, to capabilities to personalities that could limit or enhance its functionality. It is important to note a growing body of literature advocates this type of structure, regardless of its ad hoc nature; it is better suited

for the 21st century's complex and multi-dimensional environment.⁵⁶ That may or may not be the case, but since the issue at hand is to prepare for the nightmare scenarios, the government must take the lead and take action to move the ball forward with some sense of urgency.

A key lesson from this analysis is that executive branch action is not enough. Appropriate legislation that in some way or other provides authorities to institutionalize the coordination and synchronization of plans is necessary. Legislation must be specific enough to separate planning and operational responsibilities. If it is not, it is doomed to perpetuate existing problems. As seen previously, Congress charged the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate planning efforts but did not provide the authority, structure or system to perform that function. The NCTC serves as a precedent that Congress can indeed authorize an organizational structure to perform that function. New Zealand's legislation including private sector and non-governmental organizations in the cluster system of CDEM Groups is a novel approach that can serve to harness all the elements of national power.

In summary, the analysis indicates that the models used by Ireland, Canada and New Zealand to organize their emergency planning structures may not be feasible for application in the United States. However, their three respective core principles, 1) separation of planning and operations functions, 2) legislation that provide structure and authorities for processes, and 3) formal integration of private sector and non-governmental organizations as members of federal level structures, merits consideration since it can help develop a whole of government approach to emergency planning. The question is how best to accomplish this task? In Chapter V, frames a proposal for improving federal operational planning using the core principles presented in this chapter and conceptual nuggets from the case study analysis in Chapter III.

⁵⁶ Among them: Starfish and the Spider, Megacommunities.

V. THE CENTER

Using the commission's analogy of the different departments and agencies acting like a set of specialists in a hospital without an attending physician, we can say the commission settled for a specialist who could offer a second opinion without providing the attending physician who directs the operations. Not surprisingly, to date the departments and agencies have treated the National Counterterrorism Center as a source for second opinions. The reality is that all priority national security missions—not just counterterrorism require an attending physician. (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 609)

I am dying from the treatment of too many physicians.

Alexander the Great

A. THE CONSENSUS

There is a growing community of interest calling for the overhaul and modernization of the national security system and its components (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008). A number of prominent organizations and experts who have thoroughly studied the history and structure of the federal government support their calls.⁵⁷ However, achieving a consensus on how to fix the system in the short term is another matter (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 3). Part of the underlying problem rests with the sheer scale and complexity of the National Security System. The other part is the number of stakeholders and the diversity of the equities involved. The major reform studies and proposals are primarily focused on the foreign and strategic aspects of national security and typically address homeland security as a component of the overall system. Specifically, the studies draw inferences from numerous case studies both abroad and in the United States that indicate a consistent failure on the ability of the federal government to coordinate and synchronize interagency planning and operations. Granted, homeland security is undeniably a part of the

⁵⁷ PNSR, CSIS, Markle Foundation, Heritage Foundation, Academia, Commissions, etc.

system and any reform eventually affects its overall structure and processes. Still, the case study in Chapter III and the principles from Chapter IV provide a basis to develop an interim alternative to markedly improve the planning structures for homeland security, especially when considering it a system that consists of independent elements that must work together to achieve common outcomes (Miskel, 2006, p. 3). Rather than waiting for the long debate process or the next catastrophe to drive changes, a more sensible and timely approach is to focus on those areas in which a general consensus exists, and based on these, develop an option to optimize the system at least for the short term.

A number of areas where the community of interest sees eye to eye do exist. First, there is general agreement that planning is paramount and an essential element of the national security system. However, what does that mean? There are two categories of planning and the understanding of the differences between the two is essential to conceptualize why planning is a national priority and its critical importance for the effectiveness of the system. Contingency (also known as deliberative or deliberate) planning is the process of developing strategic and operational plans based upon facts or assumptions about the circumstances involved in a hypothetical situation; in other words, they are created in advance of events (U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009, p. I-1). The other type of planning, crisis action, is the process for rapidly adapting existing CONPLANS and OPLANS to the actual circumstances of the incident (U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009, p. 1-5). Thus, when the NRF and presidential directives state that planning is a national priority, they are in essence referring to a deliberate planning system because the objective is to be prepared before an incident happens. On the other hand, Crisis Action Planning is the planning that occurs during the incident, which is not really an option, since one way or the other, it must occur with or without pre-existing plans. Deliberative plans are not playbooks for emergencies that can be pulled out of a shelf to run operations magically. Moltke's admonition that no plan of

battle ever survives contact with the enemy serves as a warning. The main purpose of deliberative planning is to ease the transition to crisis action planning and put all the pieces in place for effective action (The Joint Staff, 2009).

Second, in the context of national security, no significant issues exists about the ability of the federal government to respond to disasters adequately, but that is not the case for catastrophic incidents. During the last thirty-five years, there have been 1300 presidential disaster declarations where the federal government mobilized resources or assets to support the states (Miskel, 2006, p. 132).⁵⁸ The overall performance of the federal government during the overwhelming majority of these disasters was adequate and did not trigger any popular outcry for reform. Furthermore, the federal government has been fairly effective in responding to major foreign catastrophes. In this area, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and hurricane relief in Central America and the Caribbean are recent examples of a fairly effective response that did not trigger significant criticism.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, that degree of confidence is not transferred to complex overseas contingencies or major national level catastrophes. In this case, the consensus is that current structure of the national security system can lead to a failure the next time the system is tested either in an overseas contingency or in a major national catastrophe.⁶⁰ The historical evidence is vast pointing to a consistent pattern that has not changed much in the last three decades. The expectation for failure is high and it is attributed to an antiquated dysfunctional interagency system unable to harness all elements of national power (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 1). This is the primary impetus for reforming the whole national security system, including its homeland security component.

⁵⁸ According to DSB, FEMA lists over 1700 since 1953.

⁵⁹ The jury is still out on Haiti Earthquake response.

⁶⁰ This view is shared by PNSR, CSIS, and Miskel.

Third, a general consensus exists that effective plans and operations must be fully integrated, coordinated, and synchronized both horizontally and vertically (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 14). Interagency structures and/or multi-disciplinary teams are thought to be the optimal structure for harnessing the collective power of multi-sector stakeholders with a wide range of capabilities and equities. These insights were derived from a number of historical case studies on the performance of the federal government during complex operations both domestically and overseas. In the homeland, this requirement for integration includes non-federal jurisdictions (state, local and tribal), non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the private sector. The non-federal stakeholders have critical responsibilities and essential capabilities that they bring to bear to any domestic incident. It is generally agreed that the current federal planning structure has not been able to integrate and harness these collective capabilities fully. Moreover, this recurring shortcoming cast doubts that “lead agencies” can somehow serve as a catalyst to integrate the full range of stakeholders and fulfill this role. As shown by the case study in Chapter III, the model has not been particularly successful in this area, especially in regards to horizontal coordination among federal departments.

Fourth, any reform effort must include end-to-end processes that link the ends, ways and means of national strategies (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 12). It must provide a systemic and sustainable improvement to the process of translating national security objectives to specific interagency roles, missions, and operations that can effectively integrate the instruments of national power and align national resources accordingly (Said & Holt, 2008, p. 35). While many proposals are on the table on how to achieve this, the implied common denominator of all the proposals is that they assume that departments have the capability and willingness to produce the necessary plans required to achieve the ends of the strategy. Money talks! Therefore, most proposals are linked to the establishment of a budget process that would compel the agencies to link their plans to the strategic objectives as part of their budget process. As

seen previously in the previous chapter, the assumption that all agencies have equal capacity and drive to develop the required operational plans may be flawed. Regardless, this is a major hurdle on its own merits because any changes concerning budget must also include Congress. The implication is that Congress must reform the committee structure that has oversight and appropriation responsibility over national security, including the 31 agencies that have homeland security responsibility. The White House identified 88 committees and subcommittees that might be considered to exercise authority over some aspect of homeland security (Carafano & Rosenzweig, 2005, p. 63). This particular issue makes the reform of the National Security System a hard and long-term proposition similar to that experienced during the Goldwater-Nichols effort to reform the Department of Defense. Nevertheless, the proposals recognize that any system involving multiple agencies must have some sort of structure to provide oversight and drive the process within the executive branch. This concept then broaches the last major area of consensus, which is that someone must be in charge of coordinating and integrating national security efforts (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 14).

Unfortunately, no general consensus exists as to whom or how, which is because most analyses do not consider the planning and operations functions separately, and some cases, intertwine them in the debate on whether the NSC must focus solely on policy and strategy or whether it should have an operational role (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, pp. 17–20). There is a general trend in the literature to place substantial planning responsibility on the NSC (Project for National Security Reform, p. F-6). This is the case with both the CSIS and PNSR reports that advocate an overhaul of the national security system. The CSIS *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* report recommends an interagency planning body housed at DHS but under the supervision of a Director of Strategic Planning at the NSC. This idea supports their position that the NSC focus should be on policy and strategy (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 51).⁶¹ Conversely, the

⁶¹ Also mentioned on PNSR State/Local, p. 18.

PNSR has an operational vision of the NSC that includes decentralized implementation by federal departments and interagency teams. They recommend that the NSC develop a new federal interagency system to manage the end-to-end linkage from policy to execution, which may imply some overlap over operational planning (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. 207). While not specifically pinning the rose on any organization in particular for planning, the PNSR advocates for the creation of a Homeland Security Collaboration Committee at the NSC with a “formal and systematic, up-front concur/non-concur responsibility for strategic guidance, assessment, strategy/policy formulation, and implementation/evaluation, and as may be required, issue management” (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, pp. 212–213). Their proposal suggests that operational planning should be done at a joint interagency-intergovernmental structure at each FEMA region (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. 212). In essence, PNSR seems to recommend that FEMA retain the lead for coordinating and synchronizing operational planning.

There are also proponents for keeping DHS and FEMA as the lead for planning and operational coordination and synchronization. Among them is former DHS Secretary Ridge, who in his recent book, argued that Congress should reorganize DHS along regional lines to improve integration of emergency plans and mutual aid pacts, and for building a seamless information-sharing network (Ridge, 2009, p. 261). His successor’s DHS memoir made no mention of a regional construct, but like Secretary Ridge, states that the synchronization of operational planning should reside within DHS and the guiding of policy in the White House (Chertoff, 2009, p. 148). Evidently, both secretaries subscribe to the Hart-Rudman Commission’s concept that a federal department should have the lead for coordinating and synchronizing planning and operations for homeland security (U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century, 2001).

On the other side of the spectrum, James F. Miskel proposes that oversight for the federal and system wide preparedness should be taken from FEMA and added to the vice president's portfolio or assigned to an Emergency Management Council as an office in the White House (Miskel, 2006, p. 141). However, unlike the previous recommendations examined, Miskel does not provide a structure or process by which the Office of the Vice President or the Emergency Management Council could exercise this responsibility. As stated before, a wide range of options exists on how to improve, transform or even overhaul the national security system, including its homeland security component. The options range from the very conservative represented by the numerous GAO findings that emphasize lead agency responsibility and more governance, to those who advocate a comprehensive reform of the system represented by CSIS and PNSR. In between, there is a multitude of ad hoc proposals for incremental improvements based on leadership, budget, culture and issue-specific (as a result of incidents) themes improvements, which could also have an impact on the planning system (Said & Holt, 2008, p. 50).

B. A NOT-SO-NEW IDEA

There is no doubt that the motivation for reform effort is based on serious concerns that the U.S. national security system, and by default, the homeland security system, is not ready for the next Super Bowl of catastrophes. While debate and reflection are paramount, time is not on our side. Rather than going for the 100% solution, perhaps another perspective can provide an interim solution that moves the ball in the right direction until the nation can implement comprehensive reform. By examining the five areas of consensus through the prism of the three principles discussed in Chapter IV, (the separation of planning and operations functions; legislation that provide structure and authorities for processes; and formal integration of private sector and non-governmental organizations as members of the federal level structure), another alternative

emerges that can substantially move the ball forward while minimizing some of the planning system's core problems. That alternative is the establishment of a Center for National Catastrophe Planning (CNCP).

A CNCP provides a structure by which to capitalize on the five areas of consensus within the current constraints of the federal government to incrementally and deliberately close the development, coordination and synchronization catastrophic planning gaps in the federal system. This notional organization can have the three attributes derived from the principles discussed. First, its mission and functions can be limited to deliberate catastrophic planning at the federal level with no role in the conduct of operations. Second, it can have specific authorities to develop, implement and assess federal level catastrophic planning policies. Third, it can be a fully integrated organization that incorporates federal and non-federal stakeholders representing a cross-section of government and non-government sectors in the federal catastrophic planning structure. The following section provides an overview of the potential mission, functions and structure of the Center for National Catastrophe Planning.

C. NOTIONAL CENTER FOR NATIONAL CATASTROPHE PLANNING

1. Mission

Serve as the primary organization in the U.S. government responsible for the development of integrated, interagency strategic and operational plans for responding to catastrophic events, and for establishing and implementing the doctrine and processes of the national planning system (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 10).

2. Functions

- Develops integrated, federal level interagency strategic and operational plans for responding to catastrophic events (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 10).
- Coordinate, synchronize, and integrate federal catastrophic planning efforts to integrate all elements of national power and improve effectiveness.

- Assign roles and responsibilities as part of its strategic and operational planning duties to departments or agencies, as appropriate, for development of agency plans consistent with applicable law and support federal catastrophic response strategic and operational plans, but shall not direct the execution of any resulting operations or response efforts (U.S. Congress, 2004).
- Consistent with appropriate statutes, implements a Catastrophic Planning Regulatory Framework at the federal level to establish policies, programs and other measures respecting the preparation, maintenance, testing and validation of federal catastrophic plans; analyzing and evaluating catastrophic plans prepared by federal agencies and identifying gaps in capability and capacity (Parliament of Canada, 2007).
- To ensure that agencies and non-federal jurisdictions, as appropriate, have access to and receive planning data needed to execute their catastrophic response plans or perform independent, alternative analysis (U.S. Congress, 2004).
- Pool resources to provide a cross-functional planning capability to agencies or departments that lack catastrophic planning capacity.
- To serve as the National Center of Excellence for catastrophic planning doctrine, exercises, education and technology.

3. Structure

The President designates the Vice President of the United States as the National Emergency Preparedness Manager with overall responsibility for overseeing national preparedness efforts and to chair the center's Board of Governors. The President appoints the Board of Governors for a period of three years consisting of (8) Federal Secretary Deputies, (2) Governors, (2) National NGOs, (2) Metropolitan Mayors, and (2) Private Sector CEOs to provide active public and multi-sector leadership, to facilitate contact and coordination between government departments and other public authorities, and to oversee all emergency planning. The director is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate and is responsible for the overall functioning of the center and for horizontal coordination with the National Security Council and the National

Counter Terrorism Center. Four functional groups consisting of federal interagency staff and fully funded positions for non-federal stakeholders representing multiple sectors and jurisdictions. See Figure 7.

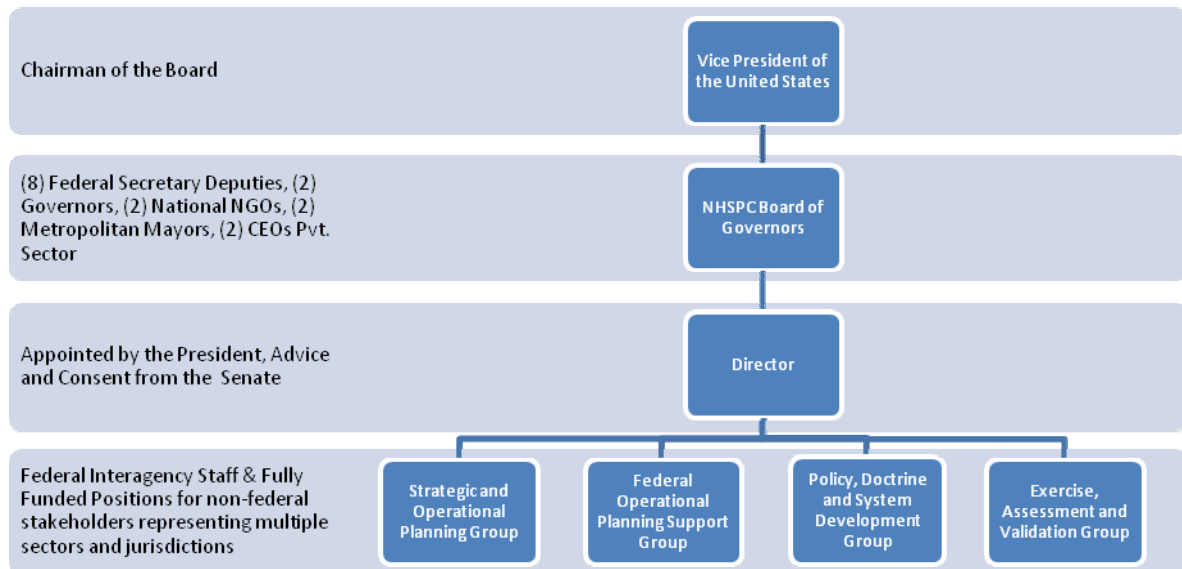


Figure 7. Proposed Structure of the Center for National Catastrophe Planning (CNCP)

Strategic and Operational Planning Group: Develops federal level strategic and operational plans; coordinates, synchronizes and integrate planning efforts; and assigns planning roles and responsibilities to federal agencies; manages plan development program.

Federal Operational Planning Support Group: Pool of cross-functional (logistics, transportation, communications, CBRNE, etc.) planners that support the development of catastrophic operational plans for those agencies that do not have full planning capacity.

Policy, Doctrine and System Development Group: Develops the catastrophic planning regulatory framework at the federal level to establish policies, programs and other measures in respect to the preparation, maintenance, testing and validation of federal catastrophic plans.

Exercise, Assessment and Validation Group: Develops the federal catastrophic incident exercise program to test and validate federal level and agency operational plans; analyzes and evaluates catastrophic plans to identify gaps and overlap in capability and capacity; and could manage a federal readiness reporting system.

The model presented above is an end state vision requiring both executive and legislative action. A caveat is implied: the transition from the current system to the end state is scalable and may require measured steps similar to those that led to the establishment of the NCTC,⁶² which raises another point that needs to be re-emphasized; this model, like the NCTC, is not the 100% solution to fix all the problems in the homeland security planning system. This model, even in a reduced scale, can fix the chronic coordination and synchronization shortfalls at the federal level. There is an ongoing debate on the effectiveness of the NCTC but a general agreement exists that it is a better alternative than the one that existed prior to 9/11 (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. 109). With that in mind, consider some of the key features of the proposed structure.

Vice President Joe Biden jokingly said, “it’s easy being the vice president. You don’t have to do anything” (Roberts & Argetsinger, 2010). This lighthearted remark hugely underscores the power of the Vice President and the potential weight he can bring as the Chairman of the NHSPC Board of Governors. Over the years, the Office of the Vice President has carried a number of portfolios in which he assumed the lead on behalf of the President, including crisis manager at the NSC and lead for government reform efforts, i.e., Crisis Manager under Reagan (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2008, p. 18); Government Performance Review under Clinton (Kamensky, 2001). In the National Security arena, the PNSR considered an option in which he would have been the nation’s National Security Manager (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 485).

⁶² Bush Administration established the Terrorist Threat Integration Center in 2003, which was replaced by the NCTC when it was established by Executive Order, and subsequently, codified by legislation.

However, this option was deemed problematic since it could lead to confusion on policy matters and accountability issues (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 458). Additionally, the tempo, scope and scale of national security issues require full time involvement, which can depend on the ability of the Vice President to take on this role. That is not the case if he were to assume responsibility for the national preparedness portfolio because it is not linked to real time events. As a statutory member of the National and Homeland Security Councils, he yields significant influence and voice over the nation's grand strategy and policies (Kimmitt, 2008, p. 400). A lesser-known responsibility of considerable power is his position as Chair of the Budget Review Board, which is the first line of appeal for budget issues before the President (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 378). These two responsibilities makes him the logical choice for leading the national emergency preparedness efforts for two reasons. First, he has the clout to ensure plans are linked to the administration strategies and policies, and second, he can influence the federal agency budget process to ensure they reflect planning priorities. In essence, this portfolio gives the Vice President responsibility for overseeing federal and system wide preparedness (Miskel, 2006, p. 141).

The mix membership of the Board of Governors is necessary to assist the Vice President in integrating the federal preparedness efforts with major stakeholders at the national level. The integration of non-federal stakeholders is a critical element in most proposals for reforming or improving the national security system. This structure of the board is not unprecedented; the PNSR's original recommendation for a Homeland Security Collaboration Committee had a similar structure (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 589).⁶³ The Obama Administration has clearly signaled that integration of stakeholders is one of its priorities as reflected in their findings during the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. 63). The QHSR implemented a systematic review process that incorporated the

⁶³ The PNSR rescinded the membership in a subsequent report Turning Ideas into Action.

participation of federal and non-federal stakeholders at various levels, including in an Executive Committee (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010, p. B6). Likewise, the President just recently issued an executive order creating the Council of Governors to provide a forum for them to provide advice and exchange information over matters dealing with homeland defense and civil support (Obama, 2010). Therefore, this structure is in line with the emerging policy of the Obama Administration. The Board of Governors would convene as often as necessary to provide guidance and direction to the director and address major policy issues under the chairmanship of the Vice President. Policy issues not resolved at this level could be elevated by the Vice President to the President for resolution or laterally passed by the Director to the National Security Advisor for deliberation in the interagency system.

The duties and structure of the director's office should be modeled on those prescribed by law for the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center adjusted towards the catastrophic planning mission. In the same way as the NCTC, a dual reporting chain to the Vice President, and perhaps the National Security Advisor, should be considered to ensure a more formal linkage to the National Security System. The director should be confirmed by the Senate to establish the appropriate level of Congressional oversight. This oversight is required given that Congress would have to provide the funding and the legislative framework for the center eventually. This framework must include fully funded federal and non-federal positions and national catastrophic planning regulatory authorities, i.e., Federal Funds are provided to the Red Cross to fund positions for planning (Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 56). Unlike the Environmental Protection Agency, which has punitive authorities, the center's regulatory mandate should focus on establishing a compliance regime that includes a federal reporting system to assess readiness for catastrophic incidents.⁶⁴ The horizontal group structure should be designed around the

⁶⁴ Consistent with current federal laws.

functions of the center and resourced accordingly. The functions of each group have a significant impact on the current system requiring methodical adjustment.

For instance, the Strategic and Operational Planning Group could consolidate the IMPT and FEMA's Operational Planning Branch and absorb their federal level strategic and operational planning functions. The responsibility for coordinating and integrating deliberate planning efforts can be assumed by the center. Both DHS and FEMA must retain capacity and responsibility for agency specific deliberate operational planning and crisis action planning, as well as the responsibility for coordinating federal response operations. The development of homeland security policy and strategy should remain the responsibility of the HSC. The Federal Operational Planning Support Group could serve as a resource center for federal departments that do not have the resources to develop the capacity for full spectrum planning. The Group mission should be to provide a cross functional planning capacity (logistics, CBRNE, etc.) to augment small federal agencies in their area specific operational planning efforts. This could significantly reduce their planning resource requirements allowing them to keep pace with larger agencies and also maintain an internal capacity for crisis action planning.

The Policy, Doctrine and System Development Group would become the engine of the federal planning system, and perhaps, eventually drive a fully integrated national planning system. This group could develop a regulatory framework that ensures that federal plans are aligned as appropriate with the development of capabilities and resources for their execution. To do this, it could develop a federal catastrophic readiness reporting system that links federal plans to capabilities and resources. The Department of Defense Readiness Reporting System could be used as a model to develop a similar system for the federal government. Lastly, the Exercise, Assessment and Validation Group should have the responsibility for developing and implementing an exercise framework that systematically tests and stress federal catastrophic operational plans. This is required to ensure all levels of government have trained and exercised to these

plans, that the plans have guided investments in specific capability areas, and that mechanisms are in place to ensure these capabilities are ready when needed (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 11). In other words, assessing and validating the end-to-end process of the system.

These notional structures are not absolutely perfect; most likely they must be further developed in detail to meet unforeseen practical considerations. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework is sound because it is built on the five areas of consensus. The establishment of the CNCP “operationalizes” the national priority by dedicating federal resources, for the first time in history, to focus exclusively on deliberate catastrophic planning. It establishes the structure outside the overburdened NSC Interagency system while maintaining the necessary connectivity to ensure synchronicity with policy and strategy. The center’s structure is fully integrated from top-to-bottom and right-to-left, which diffuses what has been a consistent shortcoming of the current system. The structure and authorities sought for the CNCP provides a framework for the development of a system that can accurately measure the end-to-end linkage from policy to execution at the federal level. Lastly, the proposal places the responsibility for emergency planning on the Vice President to provide adequate political power to drive the effort. While the proposal for the CNCP may reflect the areas of consensus, like any proposal for reform, downsides always exist that must be considered.

D. BAD NEWS UP FRONT

Establishing the CNCP at the federal level as an interagency and multi-sector organization is not without challenges. First, an issue always exists with resources, both dollars and people. Second are the structural problems of an integrated organization functioning in a stovepipe environment. Lastly, is that pesky issue of interagency resistance, which could generate an initial drag on effectiveness and present its unique set of challenges.

1. Resources

The CNCP requires considerable resources to establish and run. An organization of this type requires adequate funding for infrastructure and personnel, which, depending on its scale and scope, could be significant. Money is always an issue, specially now in a severely constrained budget environment. No one is immune from budget cuts, even the NCTC, a high priority organization with a real-time real-world mission came under the shadow of the knife recently (Strohm, 2010). A center focused on deliberate planning, by design, cannot yield the short-term “satisfaction” and constituency as its counter-terrorism counterpart. Just like NCTC, the center also faces systemic problems because congressional committee structures are not equipped to oversee and empower interagency mechanisms, which results in confused jurisdiction and inadequate support because their prioritization of resources and investments is oriented towards departmental functions, not national missions (Project for National Security Reform, 2010, p. XV). Therefore, it becomes an issue of risk and cost benefit analysis at the political level. The temptation is always there to rely on more governance to tweak the system (it is cheap) as done after Three Mile Island, Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina, than expending serious dollars and political capital to implement a sensible solution to move forward from the status quo. In the end, the executive branch and Congress need to work hard to find adequate funding for this organization, if in fact, planning is a national priority. Nevertheless, the bottom line is either pay now or for sure, pay later.

While infrastructure can be addressed by throwing money at it, personnel resources presents a variety of challenges that indeed could affect the overall effectiveness of the organization. First, federal departments and non-federal stakeholders must provide personnel to staff the center, a number of which must be planners. If past is prologue, federal agencies do not have a good track record in supporting this type of structure, and even if compelled, most likely they are not interested in detailing their most capable and best qualified to join the center

(Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 13).⁶⁵ On the other hand, for non-federal stakeholders, detailing personnel is directly tied to the availability of funding and incentives to cover their personnel costs to join the program.⁶⁶ While these potential problems may be overcome with adequate funding and the influence and power of the Vice President, the availability of qualified and experienced planners is another matter.

In today's homeland security environment, planners are a high-demand low-density commodity. Unlike the Department of Defense, which has developed a robust planner cadre over the years, most federal agencies lack this capability, and as consequence, active and retired military planners have become the principal source of talent at the federal level (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 45). DHS established a planner's course for stakeholders to address this shortcoming and similar initiatives are underway in the Department of Defense and in academia to try to fill this gap (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 48).⁶⁷ Non-federal jurisdictions, the private sector and NGOs have a limited pool of planners as well and the current economic climate makes it even worse since no excess capacity exists in personnel resources. Detailing planners away from their parent federal agencies and non-federal stakeholders could create gaps in their planning capabilities, especially during emergencies or incidents, because most organizations use their planners for both deliberate planning and crisis action planning. The design plan for establishing the center should consider this and make the necessary adjustments to minimize impact. For instance, the center may have to develop a training program for its initial staff just as the IMPT did when it started (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. 48). Training and incentives could be a good approach to reduce stakeholder pain as it may be a win-win as fully trained planners, who did their "residence" at someone else's expense,

⁶⁵ Also in PNSR's Towards Integrating Complex National Missions, p. 19.

⁶⁶ The private sector may need special incentives, such as tax breaks or some sort of internship program. DHS has a fellowship program for state and local personnel.

⁶⁷ Joint Forces Staff College and several academic institutions Google Key Word "Homeland Security Planning Course."

return to their parent agencies eventually. This situation is strikingly similar to post 9/11 Intelligence Community struggle to fill the ranks of the counter terrorism centers with qualified and experienced intelligence analysts (Putbrese, 2006), since centers can become competitors for resources with offices in agencies. The heads of agencies are not willing to siphon away scarce resources to an activity over which they have no control (Lowenthal, 2009, p. 127). In the end, both the President and Congress can direct the appropriate level of resources from federal departments for a national priority just as they did for the creation of the NCTC.⁶⁸

2. Structure

The center operates in a legacy federal structure essentially hostile to sharing resources and authorities. The proposal itself must get through the national security interagency system. However, it is likely to precipitate the same type of “food fight” experienced in the intelligence community when the Bush Administration established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the NCTC (Zegart, 2007, pp. 181–186). The interagency system’s analysis, planning, and implementation are driven by organizational equities, paradigms, and incentive structures that decrease interagency cooperation. Furthermore, the processes of the interagency system provide ample filibustering opportunities that can only be overcome by sustained presidential engagement (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 95). Three issues at this level can be used to torpedo the creation of the center. First, the federal agencies can argue that the current system can be improved (more governance) and that the center interferes with their statutory responsibilities if given authority for regulating and measuring federal performance. Second, the NSC may have concerns about establishing a quasi-parallel structure for deliberate planning because it could de-

⁶⁸ EO and Legislation.

link policy and strategy from deliberate planning. Lastly, the center requires a major revision of the current federal planning architecture under HSPD-8 and the Integrated Planning System, which can impact on non-federal jurisdictions.

These potential agency arguments reflect the same conventional wisdom that led to the intelligence failures of 9/11 and the response failures during Hurricane Katrina. The premise is that governance, or in other words, a mandate to integrate, results in actual interagency cooperation, coordination and synchronization. As seen previously, the case history does not support this premise since the U.S. planning system, and by most estimates, the nation, is not ready for another catastrophe (Wormuth & Witkowsky, 2008, p. VI). Moreover, similar agency arguments were made by the intelligence community after 9/11 and persist to this day as agencies continue to resist any effort to increase authorities for the NCTC (Project for National Security Reform, 2010, p. 18).⁶⁹ According to a PNSR report, the National Counterterrorism Center itself identified several key challenges to its effectiveness early in the planning process, highlighting the confusion about agencies' roles and responsibilities and the need to reconcile its statutory mandate to integrate across the counterterrorism mission set with existing departmental authorities in this area (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 230). Yet, no credible proposals exist to dismantle the NCTC and return the Intelligence Community to its pre 9/11 structure. On the contrary, the trend is towards increasing its authorities. The effectiveness of the NHSPC, like the NCTC, depends on the level of authorities to perform its integration and assessment functions. Hence, the establishment of the center, even on a "light" configuration like the NCTC, is a better option than the status quo and has the potential to yield high dividends by closing a structural void in the catastrophic planning system.

⁶⁹ See also Zegart's *Spying Blind*, p. 182.

Even though the center is a better option, it requires some sort of integration into the National Security System. The proposal recognizes this by establishing a reporting chain to the Vice President and suggesting a possible reporting chain to the National Security Advisor. The NSC Staff does not have the structure, manpower or authority to provide oversight over the federal planning system adequately. Over the years, the NSC staff has acquired a broad range of functions while remaining relatively small.

- Policy functions: developing, coordinating, and integrating national security policies and strategies; monitoring and coordinating the implementation of these policies and strategies; assessing the progress of policies and strategies; and managing and planning for crises.
- Administrative functions: some of which are performed by the executive secretariat, including such important activities as managing the paper flow, scheduling meetings, preparing meeting agendas, taking meeting notes, summarizing discussions and decisions, and disseminating guidance throughout the national security system.
- Staffing functions for the president: preparing briefing books, accompanying the president on foreign trips, and assisting with speech writing, among other things (Project for National Security Reform, 2010, p. 126)
- Total number around 266 (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 165).

As seen earlier in the previous chapter, real-world real-time demands take priority over less time critical deliberate planning. The staff becomes a bottleneck, not by intent, but because only it can provide effective integration (Project for National Security Reform, 2008, p. 166). Therefore, setting a parallel structure for catastrophic deliberate planning that has appropriate links to the national security system can, in fact, help reduce the span of control and work load of the NSC allowing it to focus on more pressing and critical issues. Again, the precedent of the NCTC, which currently performs the same function for the intelligence community, provides justification to set aside any concerns about de-linking policy and strategy from the catastrophic planning process. The center

with appropriate authorities would go a step further; it would provide a structure by which to measure the implementation of policy, which does not exist under the current framework.

The current framework, as explained in Chapter III, is comprehensive in content but not substance. The Obama Administration has signaled that it intends to issue a new HSPD-8 and replace the IPS with a new National Planning System. Thus, the argument that the system must be revised is essentially moot. As previously discussed, the notional structure above is an ideal end state that requires both an executive order and legislation for appropriate resources and authorities. On the other hand, the administration may elect to field a CNCP-Light by an executive order, just as President Bush did with the NCTC, and keep its focus on integrating the federal effort and providing a seat at the table for non-federal stakeholders to influence the development of federal plans. The planning capabilities and structures of non-federal stakeholders do present some challenges, specifically with non-federal government jurisdictions at the regional level.

While regional and state level planning structures are not within the scope of this thesis, some pertinent observations have implications on the viability and effectiveness of the proposed CNCP. The United States consists of 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia, all of which are as distinct and diverse as the demographics of the nation. The emergency planning systems and capabilities reflect that diversity and the level of resources that non-federal jurisdictions can afford. In 2006, DHS led a systematic national effort to assess the status of emergency plans in the states and major urban areas. At the time, the study found that the status of plans provided grounds for a significant national concern because current catastrophic planning is unsystematic and not linked within a national planning system (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2006, p. VIII).

Since then, DHS has taken steps to strengthen the 10 FEMA regions and improve regional preparedness but progress has been uneven (Project for National Security Reform, 2009, p. 19). The federal departments are expected to support the FEMA regions, but the arrangement is identical as in the federal level because FEMA does not have the authority to direct their support. DoD is supporting FEMA's effort with a pilot program in five states to strengthen catastrophic planning at the state and regional level using the concept of a Task Force for Emergency Readiness (TFER). The initiative is underway in five elected states (NORAD and USNORTHCOM, 2008). In theory, it is possible that the FEMA regions in cooperation with the states and the regional offices of federal departments may be able to develop fully integrated catastrophic regional plans but the void in the operational planning system at the federal level makes coordination and synchronization impossible. Therefore, the establishment of a CNCP is not incompatible with the current regional planning framework. On the contrary, it provides a structure in which the FEMA regions can coordinate and synchronize their plans with those of the federal agencies and the federal government in general. Moreover, the CNCP provides the states a one-stop entry point for federal operational planning instead of the 30+ agency stovepipes that exist today. Currently, the states have to discern what agency is doing what and approach them separately to gain visibility over their operational plans.

3. Interagency Resistance

The CNCP could be a pill too hard to swallow because it requires federal agencies to provide resources and possibly to yield some of their traditional authorities. Volumes of narratives exist that document interagency resistance to any consolidation of functions dating back to the creation of the interagency system in 1947. The naissance of the Departments of Transportation and Energy, as well as the Goldwater-Nichols reorganization of the Department of Defense, offer a wealth of war stories on the protracted fights that occurred before and after these initiatives got under way. The President and Congress can legally create a structure with a stroke of a pen, but making it into a fully

functional and effective real structure can take years (Jr., Hegland, & Kritz, 2002). Both DHS and the NCTC are the poster children for this very serious concern, as they are the product of protracted internal and external battles for control over resources, authorities and missions.⁷⁰ Likewise, in the case of the CNCP, these three issues generate ample opportunities for federal stakeholders along the way to veto or declaw what they may perceive as a threat to power, priorities and resources.

This consideration is relevant since it impacts the level of effectiveness of the CNCP. The stakeholders can pressure both the executive branch and Congress to weaken any authorities and resource allocations that infringe on their equities. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act is an example of the power of these forces that led to a significant weakening of authorities for the Director of National Intelligence and the NCTC (Zegart, 2007, p. 182). Weak authorities leave the center as at the mercy of the federal departments for quality manning resources and inhibit its ability to direct compliance with catastrophic planning efforts mirroring the NCTC experience (Reinwald, *Assessing The National Counterterrorism Center's Effectiveness*, 2007, p. 12). The end result is that the CNCP must be totally dependent upon willing interagency compliance and cooperation, or in its absence, increase oversight from the Vice President (Reinwald, *Assessing The National Counterterrorism Center's Effectiveness*, 2007, p. 8).

On the other hand, too much authority may make the center an EPA type agency that can inadvertently increase the burden on federal and non-federal stakeholders by over regulating catastrophic planning to the point that it can lead to major inefficiencies in the system and restrict the operational effectiveness of the departments. They can also mandate a one size fits all approach, which is absolutely not feasible, as every department has its own structures and resources. This means that the authorities given to the center must be balanced

⁷⁰ Amy Zegart's *Spying Blind* provides a narrative and anecdotes on these struggles in the context of Intelligence (pp. 173–186).

to account for the consequences of both extremes. However, even a weakened center, similar to the NCTC, is a better option than the current system or more governance. The NCTC today is widely considered one of the most successful improvements in U.S. intelligence (Zegart, 2007, p. 186). Even in its weakened configuration, the NCTC has been able to reasonably coordinate and synchronize the nation's counterterrorism planning efforts. If this is the 70% solution, then a CNCP is definitely a better option while waiting for system wide reform.

E. CLOSING THOUGHTS

The proposal presented in this chapter goes a long way in changing the status quo that has paralyzed the federal government deliberate planning system for decades. It is built on the areas of consensus shared by the homeland security community of interest. In its basic form, it emulates at the federal level the separation of the planning and operations functions that intelligence community achieved with the NCTC. The experience of the intelligence community is highly relevant since it is the most hostile environment in which a model of this kind can be tested. If the NCTC is able to some degree bring synchronization and coordination to this highly competitive and contentious environment, clearly the CNCP can do as well in leading the nation's deliberate planning effort for catastrophes and achieve success as well.

It establishes a structure that unambiguously communicates that catastrophic planning is a national priority by allocating dedicated resources and authorities. The center allows the federal government to appropriately maintain a focus on deliberate planning even when other national priorities or crises arise that compete for the attention of the national leadership. This is not the case under the current system where real-time real-world events tend to place deliberate planning on the back burner. Rather than hoping that all the federal agencies develop the capacity and drive for catastrophic planning, the center becomes a catalyst to push the process gently with appropriate, but firm

authorities to make the nation ready for the next Super Bowl of catastrophes. It breaks out of the box by establishing a fully supportable integrated multi-sector structure that incorporates all the elements of national power. This structure is essential to identify the wealth of capabilities traditionally overlooked for achieving a fully integrated national response posture as well for identifying critical gaps that must be addressed.

The CNCP in its robust configuration can become the mechanism for developing the end-to-end processes by assessing, evaluating and testing deliberate plans and providing a reporting system that can track the level of compliance with national policy. It provides the potential for establishing a national Center of Excellence that can lead the effort to develop a truly integrated national planning system. The model's structure effectively minimizes the span of control of the President and significantly reduces the burden on the NSC interagency system, while providing an equally effective leadership structure. The Vice-President and the Board of Governors provide enough horsepower top cover to coax the support of federal departments and establish credibility with non-federal stakeholders, respectively. The center gives deliberate planning a stable structure not subject to major shifts with the change of administrations. In essence, it provides a venue for the federal government to develop a professional planner cadre for the whole community of interest. The center structure is fully compatible with the current FEMA region planning structure and reduces the coordination stovepipes for non-federal stakeholders. Lastly, the center performs its primary mission, for the first time in history, the nation has a structure that can effectively coordinate, synchronize and validate federal operational plans for the nightmare worst cases of the national planning scenarios. It is neither perfect, nor without defects and does not have any guarantees. Nevertheless, it moves the federal planning out of the paralytic status quo that had led to failures during past catastrophes and places it on the path towards the future.

No ironclad guarantees exist in a profession that combats terrorists and nature. Even the best plans do not always deliver success. The historian Henry Adams said, “in all great emergencies, everyone is more or less wrong.” Planners cannot foresee every outcome, and incident managers cannot anticipate every scenario. While disasters have a language of their own and no plan can guarantee success, inadequate plans are proven contributors to failure. The results of the Nationwide Plan Review support fundamental planning modernization. Vince Lombardi said, “we’re going to relentlessly chase perfection knowing full well we will not catch it because perfection is unattainable. But we are going to relentlessly chase it because in the process we will catch excellence” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2006, p. 80).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

Rita Mae Brown, *Sudden Death*

Every Body cries, a Union is absolutely necessary, but when they come to the Manner and Form of the Union, their weak Noodles are perfectly distracted.

Benjamin Franklin, Letter to Peter Collinson, December 29, 1754

A. DISCOVERY

When the author began this research project in the spring of 2009, he was largely convinced that the inability of the federal government to establish a viable chain of command led to the failures experienced during Hurricane Katrina. This belief was influenced by his military background as well as his experience while serving in the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) Washington Office in the Pentagon. During and after the storm, the office sent liaison officers to the nations' key command centers responsible for managing the federal response to gain situational awareness of their efforts and facilitate coordination for USNORTHCOM.⁷¹ From this vantage point, the author watched as the Department of Defense mobilized its vast capabilities and USNORTHCOM moved them (equipment and people) as fast as humanly possible to the disaster area; it was not enough. The catastrophe absorbed these resources as if there was no end; everyone watched the response effort on TV and witnessed the level of confusion and frustration that reached a crescendo when the graphic images from within the Superdome told the story. At that point, the author made up his mind that the cause was the absence of a functional chain of command to

⁷¹ FEMA, USAID, DHS, National Military Command Center, USAID, and the American Red Cross.

coordinate and synchronize the federal effort. What was missing was a “Conductor” with the power to harmonize the symphony of capabilities from all government agencies participating in the response effort.

Unfortunately, the author’s conclusions proved premature and erroneous. He began his research by looking at the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) model, which was lauded for its success in coordinating and synchronizing federal interagency counter-drug operations. At the time, he was convinced that this proved that the timeless military principle of unity of command could be applied to interagency operations for federal catastrophe response just as JIATF-S was doing for counter-drug operations. That idea was quickly dispelled when a colleague arranged for him to visit with the Incident Management Planning Team at the DHS. Gently but firmly, he was told that there was no way that any federal department would submit to the authority of another department and much less to a military style chain of command. The author, somewhat disappointed that he had run into a dead end, decided to ask some follow up questions. What followed was a most enlightening and insightful exchange of information that led him in an unexpected direction for the research project. How many agency operational plans are there? Who is in charge of synchronizing these plans if they exist? How are the gaps and overlaps identified among these federal operational plans? Do all agencies have the capabilities and resources to conduct deliberate operational planning for catastrophes? The answers to these questions came as a total surprise. The federal planning system is built upon the premise that a governance framework, or, in plain terms guidance and directives, automatically result in system wide compliance and action. Translation: it is assumed that everyone is playing by the rules and delivering the goods.

B. RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

This exchange led to the research questions. First, it was necessary to develop an understanding of how the federal planning system was organized and look at its history to assess its prior performance. As seen previously, over the years, federal planning has become much more sophisticated, but the system itself has not changed much in its structure for decades. A substantial body of experts who have analyzed the shortcomings of the national and homeland security systems in detail echoed this theme. The federal government develops the governance framework, agencies comply, and hopefully, the system works as designed for the next catastrophe. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. For example, the first Federal Response Plan failed during Hurricane Andrew and how its replacement, the National Response Plan, did not perform any better during Hurricane Katrina. Once again, a new and more sophisticated framework in the form of the National Planning Guidelines, the Integrated Planning System and the National Response Framework, was created, but the basic premise of the system remains the same. Is it destined to fail during the next catastrophe? Most experts do not think it is up to the task.

Second, the author had to review the governance framework to assess whether it was producing its intended outcomes. The answer to that is not quite. Although many great Americans have made a lot of effort, the system is falling significantly short of its own expectations. The government established a reasonable planning standard with the National Planning Scenarios to examine nightmare events that had the potential to cripple this nation. The government's self-assessments and the expert's assessments clearly indicate serious shortcomings in the development of deliberate plans to prepare for a single or multiple catastrophic-level events effectively. This issue is inextricably tied with the national security system since it uses the same structure and processes. The exploration of the proposals seeking to reform the system revealed a robust ongoing debate unable to crystallize into a consensus for short-term

implementation. Waiting for the next catastrophe to strike to reform the system is, needless to say, not an option, which led the author to explore how other countries organize their planning systems.

From this analysis, the author presented three principles that can help the nation shape an interim improvement option for the planning system until the day the reform debate leads to system-wide reform. The separation of the planning and operations functions was examined and it was noted that it had been used in the past and continues to the present with the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC). The empowering Canadian legislation and its functional focus provided an idea of how to aim for an appropriate balance that may increase the effectiveness of interagency organizations. The NCTC and the EPA gave an example of the extremes, too little and too much. The New Zealand “cluster” served as a living example of multi-sector integration for emergency planning. The Armed Forces doctrine is employing a similar model in their Civil-Military Operations Center and the state of Florida is pursuing multi-sector integration using the mega-community model.

Lastly, this analysis provided the lens by which to examine the areas of consensus in the reform debate and shape a proposal to improve the system in the short term. The author established five common denominators in the reform movement: 1) deliberate planning is extremely important and essential; 2) the system is likely to fail again unless improved; 3) any reform proposal, be it short or long term, must be fully integrated to include all levels of government, private sector and non-governmental organizations; 4) the system must include a structure to provide oversight over the processes to measure, test and validate the links from strategy to mission tasks; and 5) someone must be in charge.

C. PROPOSAL: CENTER FOR NATIONAL CATASTROPHE PLANNING

Using this framework, the author proposed the establishment of a Center for National Catastrophe Planning (CNCP) under a portfolio directed by the Vice President of the United States. This notional center can be established in a light

configuration like the NCTC by executive order or strengthened by legislation to included regulatory powers over catastrophic planning. Nevertheless, the center is a scalable and malleable model that could significantly increase the effectiveness of the national catastrophic planning system. The model addresses the major existing shortcoming in the system by providing a structure to coordinate, synchronize and validate federal catastrophe plans. It is a flexible model that can coexist and even interact with the regional framework that FEMA and DHS are trying to build. As an interim solution, significant drawbacks exist that need to be addressed. In the end, it is a matter of whether planning for national catastrophe(s) is a priority that must be fixed as soon as possible or something that can wait until the debate is over or the United States' hand is forced by another failure.

D. KNOWLEDGE GAP

The research identified some areas in which significant knowledge gaps exist at the federal level. No one knows for sure whether all federal departments have developed and resourced deliberated planning capability for disasters as required by presidential directive and legislation. The underlying assumption, as noted previously, is that they have. Regardless if the CNCP proposal is accepted or not, this void must be filled since the existing planning framework is very dependent on the ability of the departments to fulfill these responsibilities outlined in policy, strategy and planning documents. As demonstrated during previous catastrophes, the assumption proved costly.

E. CONCLUSION

Some of the author's colleagues asked what does this thesis has to with the Department of Defense, and for that matter, USNORTHCOM? They argued that this is an interagency problem that should be resolved by the DHS or the NSC. After some reflection, he had to answer..."everything; it is all about DoD and USNORTHCOM. We are not talking about the run of the mill recurring disaster; we are talking about the Big One, the unthinkable, the Super Bowl of

catastrophes.” Katrina as horrible as it was, did not take the nation down the abyss, it just took the United States to the edge and provided another look at what could be. It was a wake-up call that demonstrated that the cavalry, the military, no matter how capable and how vast its capabilities are, will not be enough. GAO showed how USNORTHCOM made substantial progress towards developing plans and capabilities to support the federal government response for the CBRNE scenarios. However, it also demonstrated that the rest of the federal government is lagging in developing the necessary plans. How will the United States be prepared if a lethal pandemic or multiple nuclear incidents in the homeland occurred? Can DoD and USNORTHCOM’s impressive capabilities and the military’s gallant effort save the day? History states that the odds are against them. Without a viable federal deliberate catastrophic planning system that can effectively harness all the elements of national power, purposefully minimize the capability gaps and overlaps, methodically coordinate and synchronize operational plans, and test and validate the whole of government effort, DoD and USNORTHCOM can be left to do a pick-up game. Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew and Katrina should remind everyone not to tempt fate again.

Perhaps the experts are correct and the U.S. national security system is in dire need of an overhaul. When that happens, surely homeland security can be a significant part of that effort. Can the United States afford to wait until a consensus is reached or can it wait for the next catastrophe to force its hand, even when the worst case scenario, can bring the nation to its knees? This void in catastrophic planning must be filled. While optimizing governance can be the easiest approach to implement, it is doubtful that it can have a significant impact to deliver a fully synergistic operational planning system. The proposed center is not perfect, but it provides the best short-term option to fill the void with a proven approach to coordinate, synchronize and validate catastrophe operational plans. The time of independent action and planning by federal departments has long passed. More and more, the complex multi-dimensional and interdependent nature of the global environment requires the government to coordinate and

synchronize the application of national power fully. This can only be done by institutionalizing collaboration in multi-sector structures. The national motto “E Pluribus Unum,” or “Out of Many One” is a hint from the past that forcefully argues this point.

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